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**Evangelical Visitor - May, 1983 Vol. 96. No. 5.**

Glen A. Pierce

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# evangelical **VISITOR**

May 1983



Charting Our Course □ "It can be done" □ Now a Christian—Still an Indian □ East is East and West is West and surely the twain did meet □ United in Christ: Ministers of Reconciliation □ The Royal Law □ Congregational family camping □ God goes camping, too □ Reminder of Things Past and Present □ "The Living Word" meets for worship □ Weighing the commitment and sacrifice □ Dishwater Devotion □ Church News □ Scriptures to Live By □ Dialogue: Odd Inconsistencies? □ Onesimus □ Editorial: Reflections on Bible Study □ Readers Respond □ Stewardship Notes □ Messiah College □ Charting Our Course □ Now a Christian—Still an Indian □ East is East and West is West and surely the twain did meet □ United in Christ: Ministers of Reconciliation □ The Royal Law □ Congregational family camping □ God goes camping, too □ Reminder of Things Past and Present □ "The Living Word" meets for worship □ Weighing the commitment and sacrifice □ Messiah College



## Weighing the commitment and sacrifice

Standing to sing the closing hymn on a hot Sunday in July, I felt a twinge of guilt as I reflected on this morning's announcement in the bulletin. There was still a need for a Sunday school teacher in the children's department this fall.

As I allowed my arms to rest on my enlarged abdomen, I knew why I had decided not to teach Sunday school this year. In a few months we were expecting the arrival of our second child. I felt I needed to free myself of any major responsibilities outside the home in order to be a "good mother" to our children. But was just "being a mother" enough? What would my ministry be this year? Whose lives would I touch?

Then, as we came to the close of the hymn, the clear and distinct voice of the Holy Spirit came to me. "Being a mother is 'O.K.,'" was all he said but those words spoke much more to me. God was telling me that my ministry was to be at home. Those lives I would touch were two very important and special

people he gave to us, our 2½ year-old son and our newborn baby. There was no greater ministry to which he could call me than that of a mother—influencing these two impressionable lives for him.

Since that day, God has shown me through day-to-day experiences how challenging and rewarding this ministry is. Some may look at my decision to remain at home—without any major responsibilities and commitments outside our home—as a personal sacrifice of my own desires and needs, especially in light of today's society trends. However, I see it as a commitment to my family—to my "being a mother." My commitment involves quite a bit of my time and energy. But when I look at the few years out of our children's total life span that they will be so dependent upon me, I don't feel that my investment can be too great.

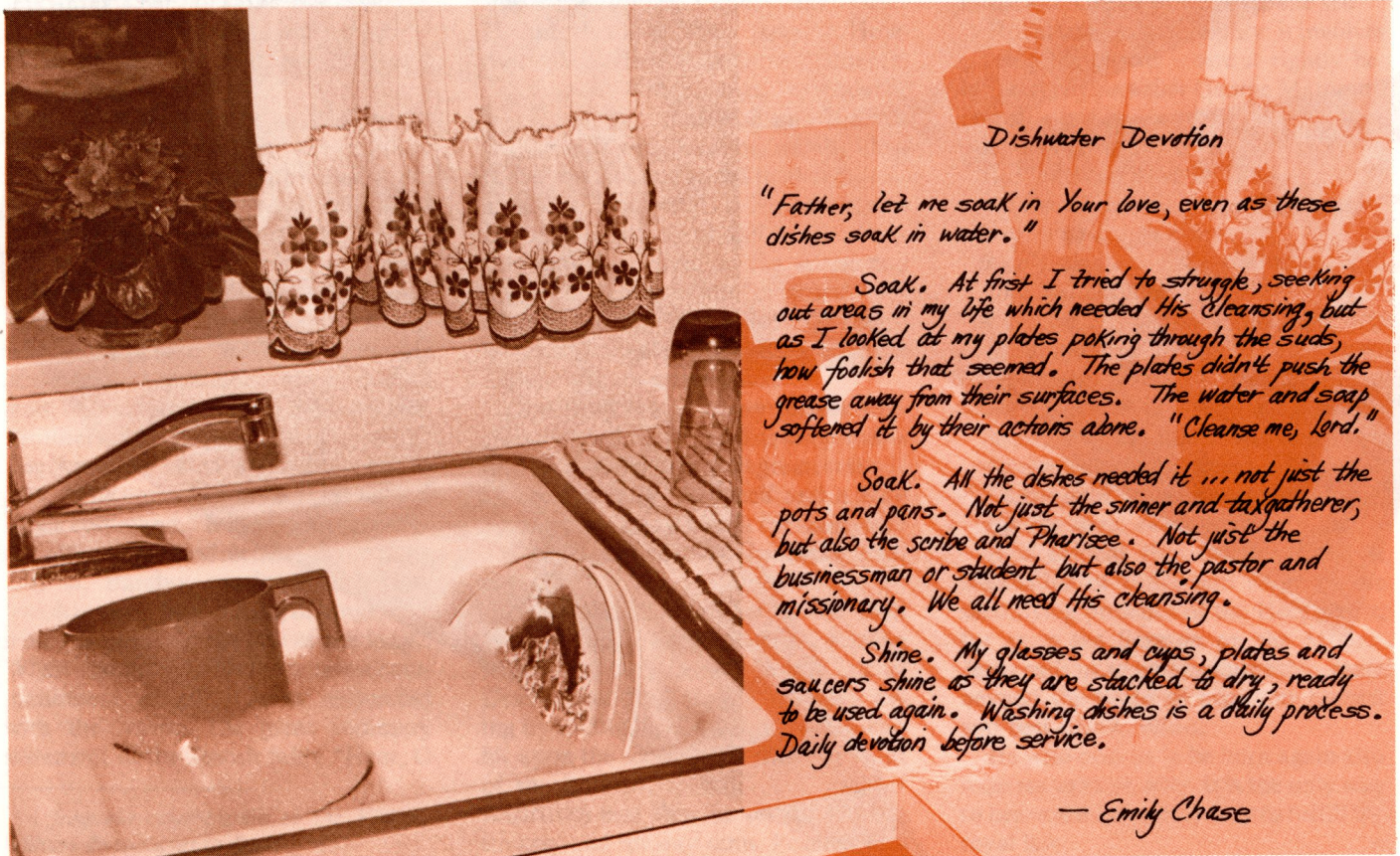
Along with this commitment does come some sacrifice, but when these are weighed against rewards, the sacrifice

seems small. My rewards often are quite spontaneous. The "I love you, Mommie" and "You sure do make a good supper, Mommie" of a preschooler and the contented cooing and babbling of an active infant lying on my shoulder make these commitments and sacrifices very worthwhile.

This does not mean there are not days and nights when I wonder where I will get the strength or the patience to face the next hour . . . or that I don't count the hours before bedtime with some sense of anticipation . . . or that I don't complain about the messes to be cleaned up and the diapers to be washed. But God has provided what I need to get through those days and nights. He doesn't necessarily make the children more cooperative or decrease the work to be done. But as I give him the reins of my spirit and attitude, he uses me to be the kind of mother our boys need. He meets my needs but not always my wants. Who am I to ask for more?

I don't feel guilty anymore for "just being a mother" because God has assured me that "being a mother" is "O.K." with him! ■

Linda and Ken Letner and sons Kyle and Kurtis live in Lancaster, Pa., and are members of the Lancaster congregation.



### Dishwater Devotion

"Father, let me soak in Your love, even as these dishes soak in water."

*Soak.* At first I tried to struggle, seeking out areas in my life which needed His Cleansing, but as I looked at my plates poking through the suds, how foolish that seemed. The plates didn't push the grease away from their surfaces. The water and soap softened it by their actions alone. "Cleanse me, Lord."

*Soak.* All the dishes needed it . . . not just the pots and pans. Not just the sinner and taxgatherer, but also the scribe and Pharisee. Not just the businessman or student, but also the pastor and missionary. We all need His cleansing.

*Shine.* My glasses and cups, plates and saucers shine as they are stacked to dry, ready to be used again. Washing dishes is a daily process. Daily devotion before service.

— Emily Chase



## in this issue...

I can remember, not too long ago, nearing a *Visitor* deadline and wondering how to fill all the pages. That, my friend, is an uncomfortable feeling.

The dilemma this month, however, was precisely the opposite. In fact, I considered adding an extra eight pages, until we computed the cost! Unfortunately, the decision to remain at 32 pages meant that two articles relating to the major theme of this issue could not be published.

Beginning on page 4, five articles explore aspects of the Brethren in Christ's ministry among ethnic groups in North America. Arlene Miller highlights some of the concepts involved in such a ministry, while other articles illustrate current examples within our fellowship.

Be sure to read Merle Brubaker's article, "Ministers of Reconciliation," beginning on page 15. We're delighted to report that nearly 1,000 copies of this issue are being shipped to congregations, so that persons not currently subscribing to the *Visitor* may study this article—the second of four adapted from presentations given at General Conference last year. (Questions for individual or group use are found on page 19.)

And we hope that some of these new readers will want to subscribe to the *Visitor*. Details on the special introductory rate are found on the business reply card inserted between pages 8 and 9.

## on the horizon...

In phoning in his order for the May issue, a pastor spoke of his looking forward to discussing Roger Sider's article, "Confronting the Secular," which will appear in the June issue. "When I got home from General Conference last summer," he said, "people in my congregation had already heard about Roger's presentation. Every congregation should be discussing all of these articles, but especially Roger's." (If not his exact words, those were his sentiments. We didn't have a tape recorder running.) Incidentally, the deadline for ordering the June issue is May 16.

And the file for the June issue is full and running over. We'll soon begin the task for pruning, selecting, copy editing. Until next month . . .

May, 1983

# evangelical VISITOR

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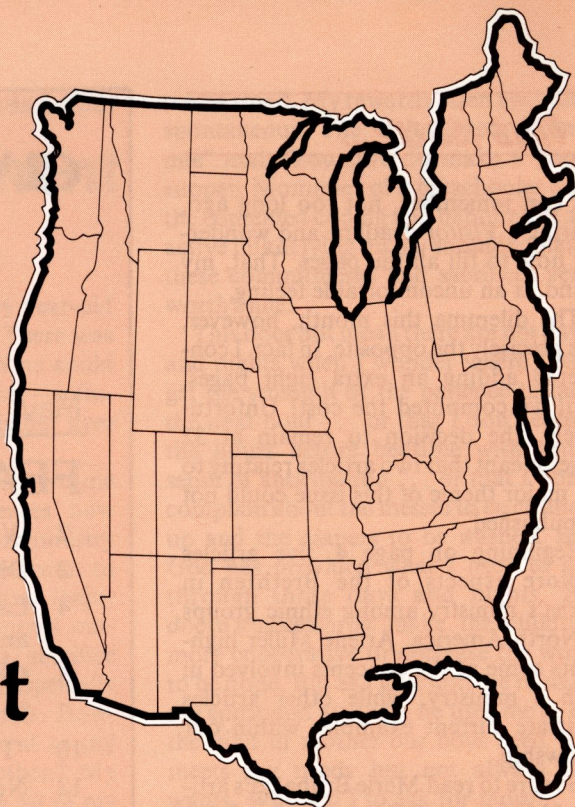
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# East is East and West is West and *surely* the twain did meet



The differences could hardly have been more dramatic. Some were from the city, some from the country; some were black, some white; some were from the East, some from the West; some had left the 1982 General Conference to go on to become world champions in Bible Quizzing, some had left that same conference with never a win. But none of these differences could diminish the impact of a transcontinental expression of brotherhood. Nine young people and the pastor from Pilgrim Chapel in Brooklyn, N.Y., visited the Labish Church in Salem, Ore., for a weekend that included an invitational quiz tournament with 15 other teams from the Northwest (mostly Nazarene teams) and a time of fellowship and ministry with the Labish congregation who hosted the tournament.

It all began at Azusa, Calif., on July 9, 1982 where the two teams met for the first time at the international competition for the Brethren in Christ Church. Immediately the coaches, Stan Norman for Labish and Grafton Forbes for Pilgrim Chapel, and their respective teams developed a close relationship. When it was reported that Labish would host a Northwest Invitational Tournament the following February, an exciting idea was born: the Pilgrim Chapel team would fly to Oregon for the competition! Although at first it seemed like "just a crazy idea," by the end of the

summer it became apparent that it was much more than that.

For one thing, the Pilgrim Chapel team went on from Azusa to become the 1982 World Champion Quiz Team. As Stan and the Labish team pursued their plans for the February tournament, excitement throughout Oregon and Washington began to mount at the prospect of competing with the new World Champion Team.

In Brooklyn the dynamics were different but just as powerful. Pastor Forbes and the team were convinced that it was the Lord's will for them to travel to Oregon—but getting there would cost thousands! As they prayed and experienced the conviction that they should be in Salem in February for more than a quiz tournament, the money came. By January it was final and the airplane tickets were purchased.

What happened on February 4-6 is a beautiful demonstration of the unique ways God has of ministering to his people. The Saturday tournament was a grand success—not so much in the quiz

competition (the simple fact was that even the best teams in the Northwest "never had a chance" against Pilgrim Chapel's dynamic quizzing style!). The "success" was realized in much more significant ways: the gracious and powerful spiritual impact of some very special teens from the inner city; the relationships that were strengthened across cultural and ethnic lines; the way many teens reexamined their priorities in light of God's claims.

The Labish Church will never be the same. It seemed as if "everyone pitched in" to host the Brooklyn guests and the 15 visiting quiz teams.

And then there was Sunday. Pastor Forbes preached to the Labish congregation with conviction and power as he shared the truth about God's call to commitment. In the evening service a panel of teens and the two pastors examined the kind of faith that makes the church real, whether it exists in a major city of the East or in a rural village in the West. As Pilgrim Chapel teens shared the hurts and pressures of inner city life, it became apparent that even survival is only possible as we fully trust in the Lord.

On Monday morning the Pilgrim Chapel travelers flew home and the Labish hosts returned to classes and jobs. But one thing was clear: the cross-continental interchange of fellowship and ministry was not "just a crazy idea!" Teens (and adults) on both sides of the country were keenly aware that they had been touched by God. ■

## **New York and Oregon quiz teams meet in a Transcontinental Tournament**

*Glenn Ginder pastors the Labish Brethren in Christ Church.*



**W**hat will the Brethren in Christ in North America be like in the year 2000? Sixteen years from now, what persons will have joined with us? Where is God leading us to spend our resources in the development of new congregations?

Answers to these questions will be determined in part by how we think about the diversity of cultures in Canada and the United States. Guided by five principles drawn from the life of the early church, we can anticipate a significant increase in the number of ethnic minority persons among us.

# 1. A church which binds persons of diverse cultures in brotherhood reflects greater dimensions of God's glory.

We are coming to a clearer understanding of how profoundly the cultures in which we live shape our life and thought. Much has been written by missionaries about how the culture of a people determines their understanding of the "good news." Differing aspects of God's glory are reflected by each cultural group. The new song of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders describes the new Kingdom:

*You are worthy to take the scroll  
and to open its seals, because you  
were slain,*

*and with your blood you pur-  
chased men for God  
from every tribe and language  
and people and nation.*

*You have made them to be a  
kingdom and priests to serve our  
God,*

*and they will reign on the  
earth.*

(Rev. 5:9-10)

The diversity of people who live in the Kingdom reflects God's gracious concern for all his created children. However, the exquisite detail of tribe, tongue, people, and nation—providing for every possible social and cultural structure—suggests another concept. God's glory can only be fully reflected in his Kingdom as persons from every group constitute its citizens! Paul asserts that glory

*Arlene Miller is secretary of home ministries of Brethren in Christ Missions. This is the last of a series of four articles relating to ethnic ministries by the Brethren in Christ in North America. Earlier articles appeared in the October 10, 1982; November 25, 1982; and February 1983 issues.*

# Charting Our Course



by Arlene B. Miller

would be brought to God both in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations and forever (Eph. 3:21). Every culture must be present to fully reflect that glory.

The Brethren in Christ in North America are at the threshold of a new opportunity to obey Paul's injunction to "lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called . . ." (Eph. 4:1). Persons living within Canada and the United States represent many cultural and ethnic groups. Today our church planting efforts are primarily among white, middle-class populations. Shall we determine now to develop churches among the ethnic minority people around us? Under the Spirit's direction, early Jewish Christians made the choice to reach beyond their Jewish cultural

boundaries with the Good News. Similarly, we Brethren in Christ must determine that by the end of the twentieth century many cultural groups will comprise the church in North America. Using recent population statistics for Canada and the United States and information in the 1982 General Conference *Minutes*, we can paint a picture of how the church might look by the end of this century. The projections represent a 100% increase in Sunday morning worship attendance over 1980.

While using this method of population quotas will not be the only criteria for goal setting, it does provide one way to describe the issue. Other factors to be considered include our gifts as a people and where we believe God is leading us.

*next page, please*

## How might our church look by 2000 A.D.?

Canadian			Projected Sunday Morning Attendance in 2000 A.D.	
% Racial/Ethnic Groups General Population (1971)				
British Isles	44.6		2,676	
French	28.7		1,722	
Other European	23		1,380	
Asian	1.3		78	
Other	2.4		144	
Total	100		6,000	
American			Projected Sunday Morning Attendance in 2000 A.D.	
% Racial/Ethnic Groups General Population (1980)				
White (less Hispanic)	76.9		24,608	
Black	11.7		3,744	
Hispanic	6.4		2,048	
Asian	1.5		480	
Native American	0.6		192	
Other	2.9		928	
Total	100		32,000	





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## 2. Cultural conflicts within the church are opportunities for Spirit-inspired creativity.

While unity of people is a long-desired human dream, it remains elusive. Unity is desirable as long as it is on "my terms" or, more broadly, on "our terms." Within and without the church, resolving conflicts between people, individuals, and groups is continuous work. When differences in cultural values are also present, the potential for conflict is significantly increased.

Witness the early Jerusalem church. The complaint of Hellenistic Jews that their widows were being neglected in the food distribution arose out of cultural differences. Appointing seven deacons, six of whom were Hellenistic Jews and one a Gentile convert, was the creative, Holy Spirit-inspired response of the church. Cultural conflict, rather than destroying the fellowship, became an opportunity for new sensitivity to the concerns of the people. The church was able to develop new structures, significantly flexible, to respond to the needs of her people.

J. Joseph Huthmacher points out three areas of conflict concerning ethnic minority groups and the dominant culture in American history:

- Tensions developed as members of the dominant society felt their own economic security being threatened.
- Differences in cultural values were viewed as threatening the Northern European Protestant values which shaped American life.
- Finally racism, the doctrine that some races are genetically inferior and will destroy the quality of our society, was propounded by some and assimilated by many.

These conflicts continue and will intensify as more and more immigrants come to North American shores in the next decade. The remaining years of the twentieth century will require the same creativity found in the early Jerusalem church.

We Brethren in Christ have a heritage of peacemaking and conflict resolution.

Always it has been an ideal toward which we strive both within our fellowship and in our relationships with the world. Is this not our opportunity for new risk-taking to broaden our experience and understanding of this teaching of Jesus, the Prince of Peace?

## 3. Persons gifted and prepared for cross-cultural communication facilitate familyhood among diverse cultural groups.

All of us begin our lives in one culture. A few privileged persons begin their lives where interaction with persons of more than one culture is frequent. Others of us learn to appreciate and respect persons from very different cultures during the course of our lives. None of us chooses the place of our birth and the Lord does not call all of us to leave our home communities. But the urbanization of North America is bringing increasing numbers of Brethren in Christ into contact with persons from diverse cultural heritages. More and more persons are coming from other nations to Canada and the United States seeking a better life.

Where are the Barnabases among us: persons prepared by life experiences and education to be God's instruments for bridge-building between cultures? Becoming and being a "bicultural" person are both a rare privilege and a costly calling. People sensitive to values and concerns of ethnic minority persons must frequently absorb within themselves painful conflicts. Roger Sider has written of such people as "marginal persons," often misunderstood within their own culture and yet not really at home in the new culture (*Mission Focus*, pp. 265-278).

Identifying and preparing bicultural persons for ministry within the community can begin in every urban con-

gregation. Many of these persons are the ethnic minority persons who presently consider themselves Brethren in Christ. Regional extension boards and administrators will need to assign bicultural persons in new church plantings among ethnic minority persons. We have begun to prepare such persons for work in North America among Navajo, French, and Hispanic people.

## 4. The development of church leaders from each cultural group must be intentional.

While bicultural persons become bridgebuilders between cultural groups, their role is not necessarily to become permanent leaders. Rather, as demonstrated by Barnabas, they become partners and mentors of new leaders. When Barnabas returned to Antioch with Paul (Acts 11:26), their purpose was to teach. In fact, they taught for one whole year! Later, in Acts 13:1-3, Barnabas and Saul are listed as equals among five church leaders at Antioch. As Thom Hopler has pointed out, one cannot avoid the conclusion that they had built strong indigenous leadership in the Antioch church. The next development was the mutual decision of five leaders inspired by the Holy Spirit to send Paul and Barnabas on their way to do other work: "It was like saying, 'You two have done your job. We're on our feet now. You don't have to stay. In fact, you should be out doing the same in places that need you more'" (Hopler, p. 110).

Brethren in Christ missionaries overseas are experiencing this privilege of teaching and being mentors. Incorporating leadership development as an integral aspect of church planting in North America is the next step. Developing church leadership is the stated

***How might the leadership of the Brethren in Christ reflect cultural diversity? Perhaps by 1990 we can anticipate selecting a black bishop. The administrator of the church in Quebec will be Quebecois. The secretary for the Board for Evangelism and Church Planting will be a Hispanic individual. Regional conference boards and committees will reflect the ethnic composition of congregations in the region . . .***



goal of both the new church-planting thrusts in Caracas and Quebec City. Initial efforts of church planters are directed towards evangelizing and discipling leaders who continue evangelization and discipling of the new churches, allowing the church planters to move on.

##### 5. Leadership of the church at every level must reflect the cultural diversity of its membership.

That exciting missionary church in Antioch drew persons from many cultures into fellowship. Very likely smaller groups of persons from similar trades, socio-economic, or cultural groups existed within the larger church in that city. Nevertheless, among the five leaders mentioned in Acts 13 we find a Black man from North Africa, a Greek Gentile from Cyprus, and Jewish aristocrat from the court of Herod.

Using this as a model, how might the leadership of the Brethren in Christ Church reflect cultural diversity? Perhaps by 1990 we can anticipate selecting a Black bishop. The administrator of the Church in Quebec will be Quebecois. The secretary for the Board for Evangelism and Church Planting will be an Hispanic individual. Regional conference boards and committees will reflect the ethnic composition of congregations in the region. As these new leaders emerge, they will share actively in all decision-making as the church carries out her work.

An easy task? Of course not. Just as the early church, we will work through misunderstandings. Conference discussions will be heated as we wrestle through issues raised by the newly developing churches. Which group will say that their widows are being neglected? What will be the creative, Holy Spirit response of the church? Let us move forward with faith and courage to discover it. ■

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May, 1983



Grafton Forbes

## "It can be done"

Arlene Miller shared her article, "Charting Our Course," with several ethnic-minority Brethren in Christ. Their summarized responses follow:

##### Pilgrim Chapel

"It can be done!" responded Grafton Forbes, pastor of Pilgrim Chapel in Brooklyn, N.Y. We were discussing whether it would be possible to count over 3,700 black persons among our fellowship by the year 2000. "I love the twenty-year projections, instead of ten. It gives more leeway and time to see where the Lord is leading."

Brother Forbes observes that if you basically give the Word, the Truth, people will respond. "God has blessed us here at Pilgrim Chapel. If we had more space, our membership could be doubled in thirty-six months." Many people can't identify with a store front, he feels, but want a building that looks like a church. He is now praying with his congregation for more space.

Reaching the goal of having many Brethren in Christ members in the city will take a lot of sacrifice, according to Pastor Forbes. "You can't just preach in the city. It's being there when they hurt." The Forbes family demonstrates *being there* by opening their home and the church daily to young people who come

following school and stay until 10:00 p.m. "We run open house everyday. Our food bill is enormous."

##### Bridlewood

Five families of Egyptian heritage are part of the Bridlewood congregation in Toronto, Ont. Mable Monessa and Badie Boctor agreed to respond to ideas expressed in "Charting our Course." Mrs. Monessa, with her two children, has been in Canada for seven years. While searching for a church after their



Mable Monessa

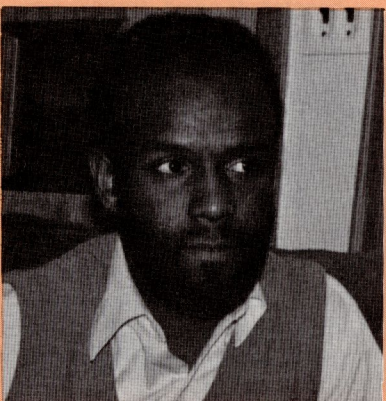


## "It can be done"

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arrival, they discovered Bridlewood and have been attending there since. They were comfortable with the ceremony of the service and the people were very friendly.

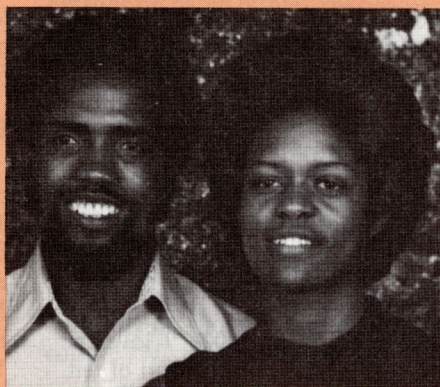
When questioned about the projected numbers of ethnic-minority persons in twenty years, Mrs. Monessa responded, "It is not a *number* you want to put in



the church, it's *people*." She thinks that North Americans have little understanding of the culture and history of other peoples. Learning about the long history of the Middle East would make persons like herself feel more welcomed. "People bring people to church," she says. "You must be friendly."

Badie Boctor has been in Canada for fifteen years. He too, with his family, was looking for a church and associated with Bridlewood because of the people. "They were friendly and received us with both arms open." He believes that the Brethren in Christ Church is open to ethnic-minority persons in leadership positions. He experiences this both at the denominational level and in the Canadian Conference. "The door is open," he says. Badie has recently been appointed as deacon in his congregation.

When questioned about working with the many Egyptians in Toronto (10,000-15,000) who are Muslim, both Mable and Badie agreed that it would be difficult. Persons working with Muslims would need to study Islam.



Top: Vivian Kelly. Middle: Bonita Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. William Ross. Lower: Morris and Dawn DuBois.

## Valley Chapel

Vivian Kelly, Bonita Johnson, William Ross, with Dawn and Morris DuBois from Valley Chapel congregation in Canton, Ohio, gathered to discuss their experiences as black members of the Brethren in Christ Church. All agreed that the traditional role of the pastor in the black church has been different than what they see in the Brethren in Christ Church. "Black people like a strong leader." Vivian Kelly says, however, that the strong leadership is not always accompanied by matching spiritual strength. It was the quality of life of pastors in the Brethren in Christ Church that attracted her with John, her husband, to Valley Chapel in the mid-1950s.

Leadership is the key for developing more congregations within the black community. Dawn DuBois expressed the view of the group that the pastor would need to have a strong pulpit ministry but also would need to lead an exemplary life. The church developer would probably need to be black, but it might be possible to have a white assistant.

Vivian Kelly thinks that there is increased interest in Bible study among black people. The inroads of the Jehovah's Witnesses in the black community through home Bible studies was cited as evidence of this.

When the location of possible new black churches was discussed, Atlanta, Georgia, was suggested. Dallas, Texas, was also mentioned, since there are four young people from Valley Chapel now living and working there. Vivian said her daughters, Deborah, Elaine and Royanne, have been looking for another Valley Chapel in Dallas without success.

Dawn said that missions and outreach are not emphasized in the black churches she knows, no effort to train leaders to go into missions or pastors to start new churches.

When questioned about developing leadership among black persons, Dawn and Vivian agreed that such efforts should be undertaken. "If we feel that

**"Now I get the  
that the  
something"**

*Evangelical Visitor*



God is calling us, we need to be open and God will use us." Training in evangelism, Bible schools and teacher training they see as necessary for leadership development.

How do black persons experience the church beyond the local congregation? Morris DuBois laughed "The first time I went to General Conference, everybody asked me what African country I was from." Vivian found her first experience beyond the local congregation at General Conference several years ago to be a "rude awakening." Morris says, "I have a good time. I know my territory. I'm more relaxed and know more people now." When Bill attends Regional Conference he finds most people readily identify him as being from Valley Chapel. All agreed that having greater numbers of black persons attending such meetings would be wonderful. Seeing black persons on the platform at conferences would also be positive.

### Fellowship Chapel

Gilbert and Anna Martinez, Osiris (Ozzie) Maldonado and Mimi Martin of Fellowship Chapel in the Bronx also responded to "Charting Our Course." Ozzie was stimulated by his experience as delegate to the Atlantic Regional Conference in Dublin, Virginia. He was excited by the theme, A Reproducing Church. "There is such a great need in the city. There are so many people here and so many that are seeking." When asked to cite examples, he named three persons he knows who are searching, one within a cult.

Ozzie feels that there should be more Brethren in Christ churches in New York City and suggested North Bronx and Yonkers as locations. "The Brethren in Christ have only two churches here and everything else is in Pennsylvania. Now I get the feeling that the Lord is planning something tremendous."

Ozzie is attending a Spanish Bible school two evenings a week. He feels a burden to reach out and says "you have

to be trained" to do that. Gladys, his wife, has studied for three years at a Bible school. Ozzie feels it would be good for the Brethren in Christ to have a Bible school in the city. "A person like me, I need to go here because of finances and schedules. I have a wife and family." Ozzie agrees that ethnic-minority people should be in leadership positions, but only if they are prepared.

Mimi Martin has attended Fellowship Chapel since five years of age. Following her graduation from Messiah College she returned to New York City where she works as a director of recreation at a youth agency. Involving the youth at Fellowship Chapel in programs of the denomination is one of her desires.

Mimi thinks that the Brethren in Christ Church has much to offer ethnic-minority people. She sees developing leaders to take up the program of the new church as essential. Learning more about the specific cultures where new

churches are being developed is important.

Gilbert and Anna Martinez believe that Spanish language services would bring greater response from some of their neighbors. Anna says, "When I tell them my church is English, that is a barrier right there." A Spanish Brethren in Christ Church somewhere in the city would be good. The Martinezes also agree that leadership development of ethnic-minority persons is essential. "We must train someone who can lead the church, someone who understands the people." They believe that selection of ethnic persons for denominational leadership should be based on ability. ■



Above: Gilbert and Anna Martinez. Right: Mimi Martin. Below: Ozzie and Gladys Maldonado.



**feeling  
Lord is planning  
tremendous"**



Anyone who has visited or lived in Southern California for even a short time knows that a major group of the people living here have Hispanic background. There are at least four million Hispanics in the Los Angeles area. The United States, in fact, is the fifth largest Hispanic nation in the world. So it was no surprise that out of our regional church planting vision we were faced with the opportunity of a mission field next door. There are more unevangelized and unreached Hispanics in Southern California than in almost any other population center in the world, including South America. So we wrestled with the challenge of reaching a large group of people geographically close but culturally distant.

We knew that a few Hispanics were in our churches and at points in the past we had attempted to reach our Hispanic neighbors, but we weren't really effective in ministry to any major group. Our Extension Board had an uneasy conscience about planting new churches without including the Hispanic group. But we didn't seem to have any bridges between our present churches and the large, unreached Hispanic population.

However, in one of our church planting projects, a college teacher, Tom Dunn, met a student, Freddy Negrete. (Personal contacts are usually the best bridges for outreach.) It was out of this relationship that we met Freddy Negrete and called him as the potential leader of a Hispanic movement among the Brethren in Christ. We are encouraging him to start one congregation, and then, together, we will discern the Lord's leading. We need the prayers and support of the church in this mission thrust. It is an exciting adventure that will take patience, persistence and trust. But we are beginning, and that is the first step of faith.

Bishop Don Shafer  
Upland, Calif.



## "The Living Word" meets for

Sunday, March 13, a southern-California-rainy-season-kind-of-day, opened tentatively sunny, slipping into overcast over the Ralph's shopping center complex of West Covina. But in the San Gabriel Valley YWCA located there, energy for the day was generated, not from sun in the sky, but by the Son from Heaven. Thirty-nine adults and 17 under-school-age toddlers gathered to observe their first Lord's day as a church body in worship, fellowship, and teaching.

That the building was theirs to rent at all was a miracle. The board of directors of this local YWCA had established a policy—no renting of the facility to churches. But God overruled in the hearts and minds of men, and this building capable of holding over 200 people in the main hall (plus other rooms of good size) had been opened to The Living Word Brethren in Christ Church.

The congregation gathered just a little hesitantly, not sure of themselves in totally new surroundings. But two young men, Raul and Carlos, stationed themselves by the door, taking very seriously their appointed task of greeting each person with familiar warmth and joy, not overlooking the smallest toddler. Mrs. Negrete, assisted by two other young mothers—with mysterious skill and dexterity—herded upstairs and kept under control the dark-eyed, dark-haired, vivacious, wiggly, adorable pre-schoolers, while the adults praised and listened in the main hall below.

Pastor Freddy Negrete, an accomplished tattoo artist by trade, was himself rescued from a life of street gangs and drugs about three years ago. As the word of Christ grew in him, he went back into the streets to the people whose hopeless life he knew first hand. He returned with a passion to share Jesus. These young people gathered together this day were the fruit of his faithful witness in dangerous territory. For about a year he had shepherded them through evening fellowships and Bible studies—his own people, all beautiful in their Mexican ancestry, all wounded by the shocks of transplant into American culture, all ready to become by the alchemy of the Holy Spirit everything they can become in Christ Jesus.

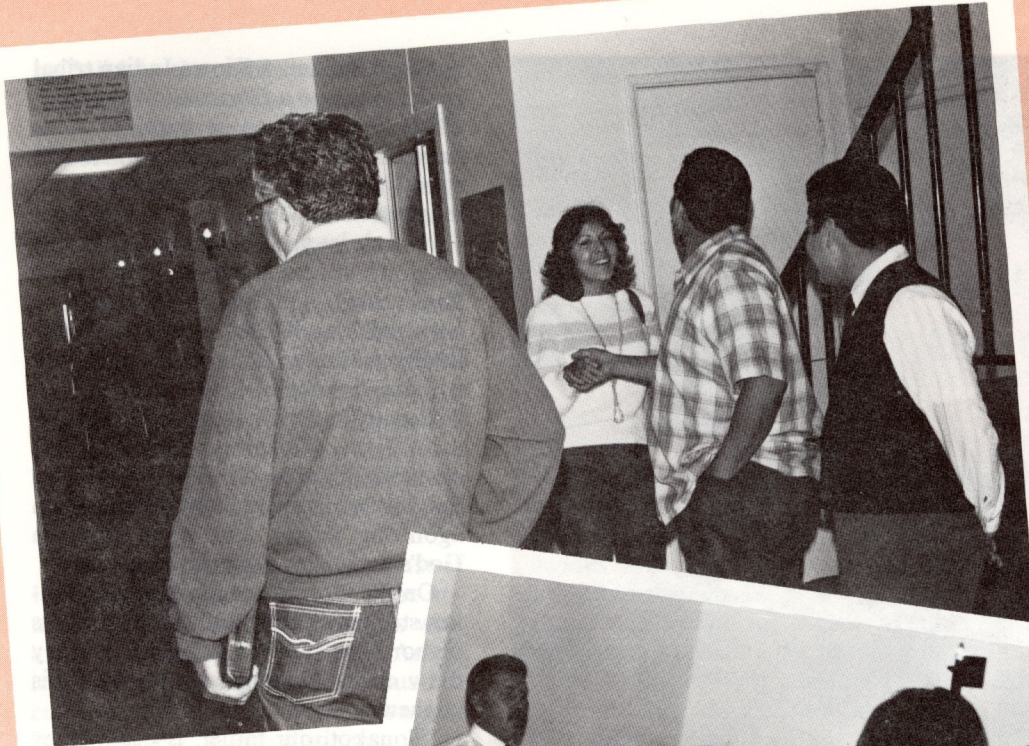
The message of the morning from Luke 18:1-8 was geared to equipping these new Christians to be witnesses in their environment, a milieu hostile to faith. "However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" What kind of faith is Jesus looking for?

Pastor Negrete challenged the group with a four-fold picture of the faith Jesus desires: an obedient faith, a serving faith, a fearless faith, a knowledgeable faith.

Following the service there was much visiting, sharing, hugging of children, and leisurely leaving of the building. Freddy and Patricia Negrete, with their three small children, work closely with two young men who share their vision. Alvaro Macias is their communicator with Spanish speakers, first generation Mexican-Americans. David Morales also supports Freddy in ministry. Freddy, in addition to his pastoral responsibilities, continues to work on a bachelor's degree in ministry and theology at Azusa Pacific University.

Reported by Thelma Book, Upland, Calif.



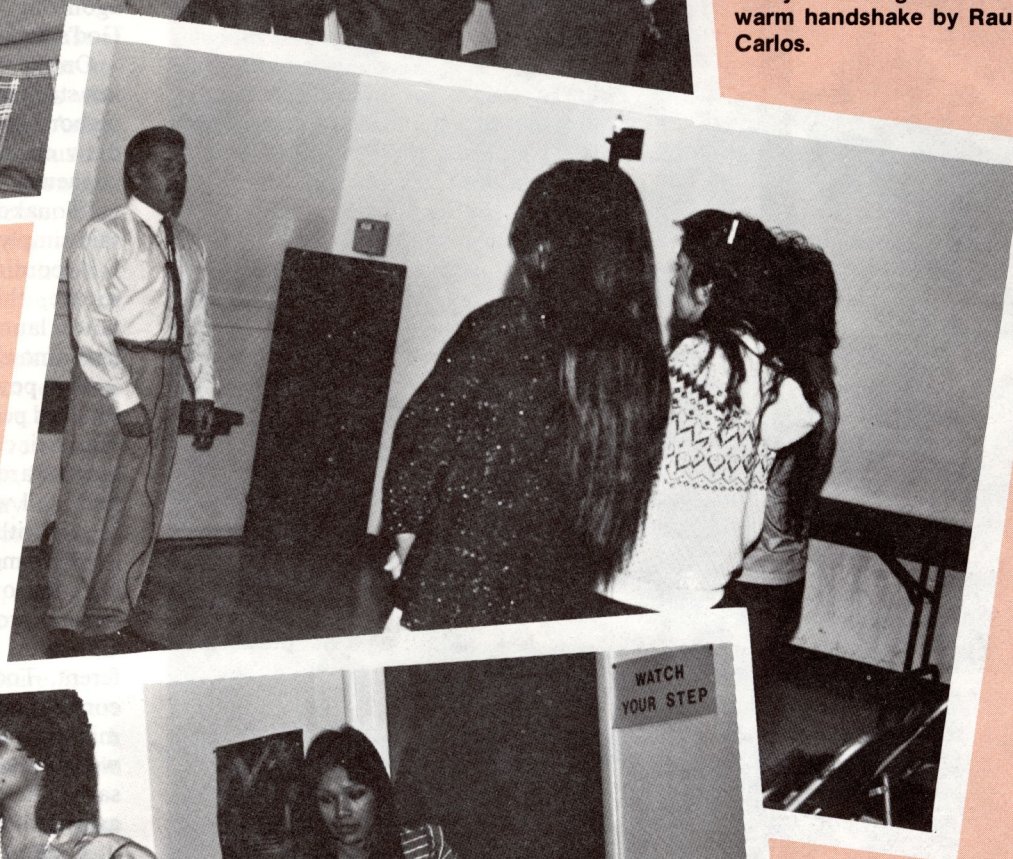


Everyone was greeted with a warm handshake by Raul or Carlos.

# worship

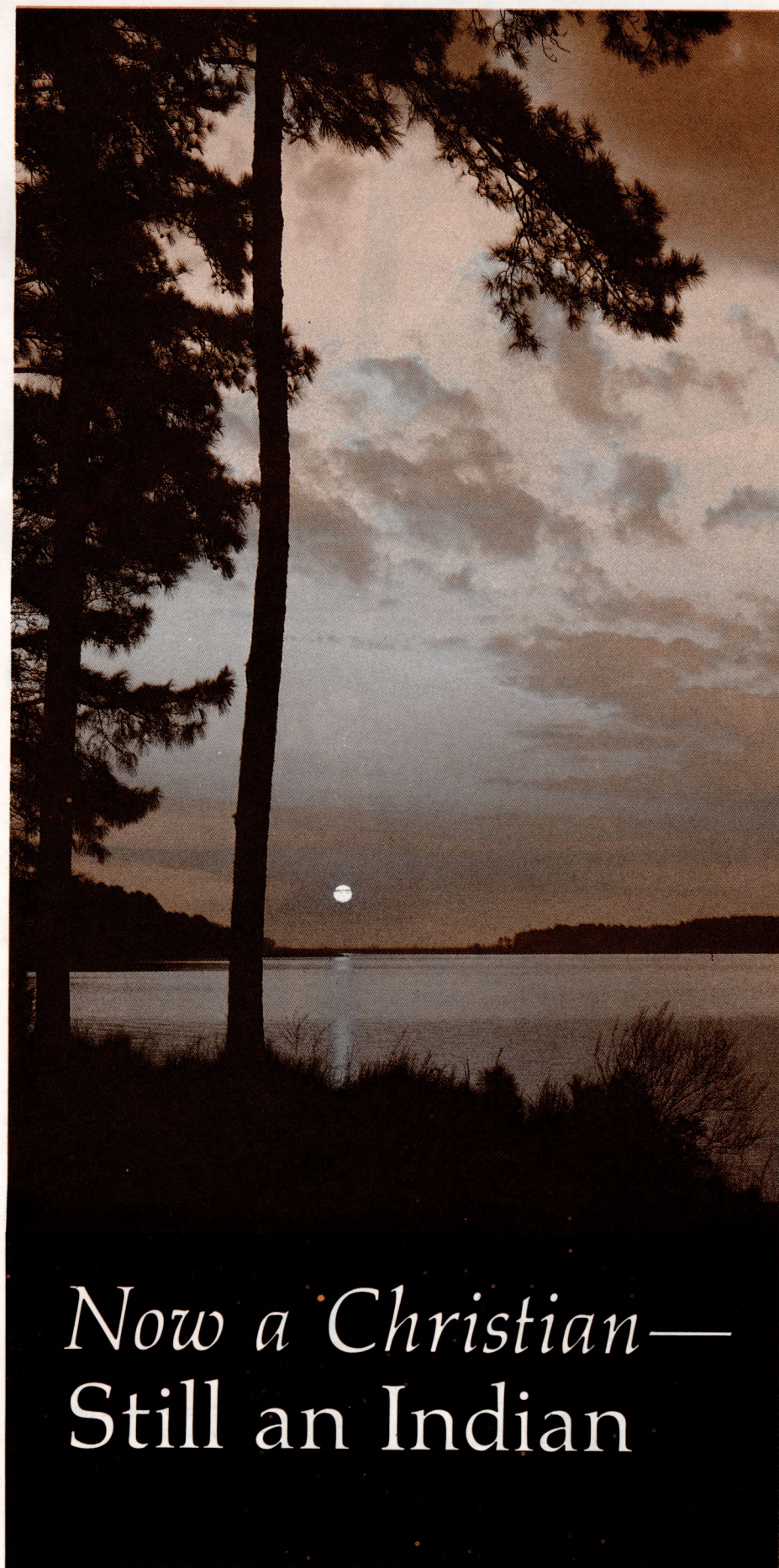
by Thelma Book

Pastor Negrete leads the morning worship service.



Patricia Negrete (left) with several of the 17 toddlers.





## Now a Christian— Still an Indian

When Sankee, a Kiowa Indian tribal leader, became a Christian in the mid-1800s he wanted to be baptized. This enraged his brother, Tonakot, who was a peyote priest and followed the old religion.

"I can't let you forsake your father's religion," he spat at Sankee in front of a large crowd. "On the day you are to be baptized, we will find out whose God is stronger. If mine is more powerful, you will die. If yours is, I will die."

Having known the supernatural power of Tonakot's spirits, Sankee understood that this was a very serious threat. Frightened, he spent many long hours in agonizing prayer, but stood firm on God's promises to protect him.

On the morning of his baptism, Sankee stepped outside and saw two riders on horseback approaching him. As they drew closer, he realized they were his nephews.

"Tonakot, our father, is dead," they said simply. "He died at sunrise."

According to the story passed down to me, this demonstration of God's power launched a great work of evangelism among the Kiowas.

The power of the risen Christ has touched people all over the world, whatever their color or background. And just as there are different parts of the human body, all with indispensable functions, so it is with the Body of Christ.

The American Indians are no exception, but one reason the Indian church has not grown more is that, in the past, Christians have not allowed it to be different. Too often Christianity has become confused with white culture. Older missionaries seemed to believe that these were one and the same. If an Indian was saved, it was assumed he would turn away from all his Indian ways.

Today, however, we recognize the value of ethnic and cultural differences as part of the search for identity and recognition. "Chicano Power," "Black is Beautiful," "Red Power," "I'm Proud to

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*Rev. Tom Claus, president of CHIEF, is a Mohawk Indian of the Turtle Clan from the Grand River Reservation near Brantford, Ontario, Canada. He and his wife Alfreda, a Kiowa Indian from Mountain View, Okla., make their home in Arizona. They travel extensively, speaking and singing in evangelistic crusades, Bible conferences and missionary conventions. He represented the American Indians at the 1966 World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin and the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland.*

*Evangelical Visitor*



be Polish"—the proliferation of bumper stickers, T-shirts and wall posters attests to the emphasis on preserving the integrity of one's heritage. The complexity of modern-day America is causing large numbers of individuals to look for a sense of security and uniqueness in their roots.

Among those at the forefront of this movement for cultural identification are Native Americans. Long a silent minority, Indians are now mobilizing. They are no longer eager for the assimilation into the mainstream of society which once was the goal. Today, the interest is in preserving Indian traditions and culture.

This reawakening of a strong sense of Indian consciousness has not gone unnoticed by evangelical Christians who are involved in ministry to Native Americans. The intermingling of religious and cultural traditions is very strong in Indian society. A fine distinction must be carefully made between the two if there are to be established churches that are truly Indian churches—true to the Word of God.

Christianity and Indian culture are compatible because the Indian religions are only one part of the culture. Culture is what makes us different from other people by our language, dress, housing, food, crafts, gestures, the way we treat our children, our respect for our old people, our legends and our unwritten code of conduct. All of these, and much more, determine our behavior, our attitudes and values.

This is what Indian culture is all about. Christianity doesn't change these things. It simply provides an Indian with a new hope, a new purpose, a new life in the person of Jesus Christ.

But it is not always easy to separate religion from the rest of the Indian culture. For example, Eskimos often perform a folk dance which depicts a seal hunt. With their movements and gestures, they tell stories of each part of the hunt. There is nothing religious about this dance, and we would miss a very special aspect of the Eskimo culture if we avoided it on religious grounds.

The same cannot be said, however, of all dances. The sun dance of the Plains Indians, as one example, is definitely an act of religious worship.

Indian religions have influenced more aspects of their cultures than we may be aware of. I am very familiar with Indian cultures, yet once unwittingly wore a beaded peyote priest pin on my hat as a decoration. Still, it is our responsibility

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## With Jesus as a guide, we will be able to decide whether or not to participate in the old traditions . . .

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as Christians to share our faith in all situations. Sometimes in evangelizing Native Americans, that means attending religious gatherings to counter the influence of Indian religions.

Several years ago my mother and I were going to a missionary conference in Calgary, Alberta. We stopped for a visit among the Blackfeet in Montana and stayed with a wonderful Christian doctor who was practicing medicine and trying to evangelize the tribe.

After an evening service at which several people accepted Christ, the doctor told me that a Rocky Boy Cree medicine man was performing a ceremony in the area that night. Seeing it as an opportunity for witness, we walked to the building where it was being held and found the ceremony in full swing. We sensed a real clash of spirits as we entered but stayed because we knew that we were in a place where the Lord could use us to do battle for him.

The doctor arranged for me to give a short talk, and I spoke on the fact that since Christ was the ultimate sacrifice, there was no need for animal sacrifices. All we need do is accept the work that Jesus did on the cross, and we could know the forgiveness of sin.

I prayed at the end of the talk but gave no invitation for salvation. However, on the way out, a woman stopped us and asked that we accompany her home. We shared the Gospel with her family and were privileged to lead them all to the Lord. A church begun by that family is still growing today—all because we brought the Lord to the Indians where they were.

Before his life-changing encounter with Jesus, Paul was a violent, militant leader who traveled his country to persecute and kill Christians. The fact that the Lord used him as the greatest evangelist and teacher of all time should encourage us to reach out even to the militant, radical Indian leaders. I know a woman in South Dakota who prays

daily for the salvation of the leaders of the American Indian Movement. She sees the potential in them to be used in a great way by God. If we accept the challenge in the power of the Holy Spirit, we could be evangelizing someone who might become an "Indian Apostle Paul."

It would be easy to go overboard with this type of evangelism and possibly compromise our beliefs, so some kind of judgment needs to be exercised in witnessing. I remember visiting a family of Indian believers a couple of years ago and seeing a poster in their home advertising a church family camp which featured gourd dancing and pow-wow. This distressed me because they appeared to be compromising their Christian beliefs by encouraging participation in ceremonies which are such an integral part of Indian religious tradition.

Many Christians have been trapped into believing that Indians will be attracted to Christ by mixing the Indian religions with Christianity. We need to be very cautious about this—Christianity does not need to be watered down. It can withstand attack and should always be proclaimed boldly.

In order to avoid such possible conflicts, Native American Christians need constantly to be questioning their actions and measuring them against biblical standards. We should be wise and discerning about our involvement in borderline activities. With Jesus Christ as a guide, we will be able to decide whether or not to participate in the old tradition, attend pow-wows or keep the old fetishes.

There are many ways we can strengthen the Indian church. One of the best is to recognize what it is: a group of baptized Indian believers who meet together to study God's Word, worship him, and fellowship together. In other words, the basic function is the same as that of any other church.

*next page, please*



## Now a Christian— Still an Indian

from page 13

We should allow the Indian church to worship Jesus its own way. We should encourage singing to praise him in the native language, with native instruments. We should allow the order and times of the services to coincide with the Indian lifestyle.

Most importantly, we should encourage native leadership in the churches. They must become self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating and self-educating in order to remove the stigma of the "white man's religion."

When CHIEF (the Christian Hope Indian Eskimo Fellowship) was organ-

ized five years ago, we took a survey of most evangelical Bible colleges and seminaries to find out how many Native American young people were preparing for the ministry. We found only 37, and found also that the average age of the few Indian pastors we have now is 52. This means that if we don't win, counsel and guide our Indian young people to Christ and his service, we will be without any leadership for the Indian church in another ten years.

The only way to produce new leaders is to win more young Indians to Christ and get them involved in the church.

We must educate these young people so they will be able to preach and teach sound-in-the-faith, biblical, evangelical theology—within Indian culture. There are many parts of Indian history and

legends that can be used to relate Bible stories such as creation, the flood, and prophecies of a coming Messiah. We must relate the Gospel to the Indian within his culture, just as Paul did for the Gentiles. If we walk in the Spirit and do all to the glory of God, then we will have few problems deciding which parts of the culture are acceptable and which are not.

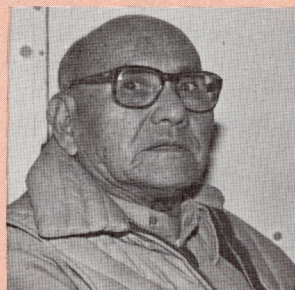
Strengthening the Indian church is an issue that needs to be dealt with now. If it isn't, the Indian church will become stagnant, powerless and ineffective. We must take an honest look at Indian culture, accept with pride the Indian heritage that is wholesome and good, and trust the Holy Spirit to guide us in establishing true Indian churches—true to the Word of God. ■

## Responses by Native Americans associated with the Brethren in Christ

*Three long-time associates of  
the Navajo Mission, New  
Mexico:*

### JOHN PETER YAZZIE

It's very good. I like that. We have street meetings with Andy Begay. I don't think the Navajo can use their creation story to tell about the Bible but there was a man who came, died and rose again.



### FANNIE M. SCOTT

It sounded all right to me. There is no place for pow-wow in the Christian life. The Navajo needs more teaching from the Word. Each pastor should train men to go on. We must train them. There should be born again Christians who have dedicated their lives to the Lord so the Navajo people will see it as a good life and make them desire to be that way. Our life teaches others, also our words.



### CECIL WERITO

I don't know what to say. Tribes are different. I don't think the Lord would call us to go to a squaw dance to witness. I remember when we talked about this in a Bible conference. Psalm 1:1 says, "Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Some preachers believe



it is good for Navajo to go even to rodeo. We must be standing strong for the Lord. I don't see how a Christian can go even to a small "sing" (a traditional religious ceremony). There are many things we used to do that we can't do any longer. We need to be separate. We need to really witness to someone. Tom says, "We should encourage singing . . . with native instruments." I haven't really seen anything like that among the Navajo. We would need to be careful about using traditional music. In the traditional way there is a flood but somewhere they got sidetracked. There is someone like a Messiah but it got all twisted up.

### From Timber Bay, Sask. LULU BEATTY

(Of Cree Indian heritage, Lulu lived at Timber Bay Children's Home as a child and now lives in the Timber Bay community.)

Indian people think that when you become a Christian you are changing your religion and your culture. They think that you are changing how you will act towards them, that you think you are better than they are. There are friends you don't associate with but you don't think you are better than they are.

Many Christian Indian people still live in the same humble house and wooden cabins. If we could give them illustrations of Christians who still live as they always did. . . .

I remember Hubert Smith, a shanty man who talked to us (at the Children's Home) about Jesus. He walked on snow shoes, pulling a toboggan. Many people remember him. He came to them like one of them, in their dress and the way they eat. He was a simple, humble man.

(In reference to witnessing at traditional ceremonies): It was great that he (Claus) could minister to people in those settings. But I myself cannot do it. The Bible says you should not associate with demonic cults. I feel it would be a bad influence if I would go there as a Christian.





*Do everything without complaining or arguing so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.*

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*Merle Brubaker is senior pastor of the Lancaster (Pa.) Brethren in Christ Church. This article is an adaptation of a theme sermon presented at the 1982 General Conference, the second of four articles surrounding the theme "United in Christ in our fragmented world."*

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It is in a crooked, depraved and fragmented generation that we are enabled to become children of God without fault, blameless and pure. As we do, we shine like stars drawing attention to the word of life—the message of reconciliation.

#### **Our Union as Children of God**

You have made it easy to preach this part of the sermon. We have experienced and celebrated unity here in the love feast, in singing and prayer, and in the genuineness and sensitivity with

which we have shared our convictions during the business sessions.

We are experiencing unity across national boundaries and across the barriers caused by our personal preferences and individual experiences and training. We come from the East and the West, the North and the South.

The first part of our General Conference theme—United in Christ—is a crucial part of this morning's theme message. I would like to suggest seven truths about our unity as children of God that will encourage us as ministers of reconciliation.

1. *Our unity is in Christ.* We are Brethren in Christ. Paul's favorite expression to summarize Christian experience is to say that someone is "in Christ" (II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 15:7). People can appear to be united by being "into"

baseball, sail surfing, ecology, or the latest guru. As churches we could be superficially united in our love for a certain kind of music, for a certain style of worship, for a certain kind of preaching, or in our special affection for a certain leader.

When God reconciles us to himself in Christ, he deals directly with what is fundamental in our alienation—our rebellion against him and our self-centeredness. God-centeredness is the solution, not other-centeredness (altruism) nor group-centeredness (sectarianism, provincialism, nationalism or humanism). Christ "died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again" (II Corinthians 5:15).

*next page, please*



## **United in Christ: Ministers of Reconciliation**

**by Merle E. Brubaker**



## ***We have been reconciled to God and to each other.***



### ***2. Our unity is a God-created fact, not a human achievement.***

Democratic Senator Harold Hughes once said of Republican Presidential Assistant Charles Colson, "There isn't anyone I dislike more than Chuck Colson. I'm against everything he stands for." After hearing Colson's testimony, Hughes said to Colson, "I love you now as my brother in Christ. I will stand with you, defend you anywhere, and trust you with anything I have."<sup>1</sup>

It is a fact that we are united in Christ with every Christian in the world, and the significance of that fact needs to have more effect on our behavior than it does. Can Christ be divided?

***3. Our unity is in diversity, not in sameness.*** We are not united in the way we think about everything, nor even in our vocations anymore. Sometimes we long for a unity based on commonality; it *seems* that unity is easier to achieve when everyone comes from the same sociological, economic, political, or theoretical background.

But our unity in Christ does not depend on our similarity. Using the worst example of alienation he knew—the Jews and Gentiles—Paul tells the Ephesians that Christ "himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility . . . to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace" (Ephesians 2:14, 15).

Jesus can hold together vastly differing personalities and viewpoints, as was demonstrated in the twelve disciples—Simon, the Zealot revolutionary (terrorist?), and Matthew, the collaborationist quisling.

Whom do you most despise? God can bring reconciliation. Paul might say God already has. Has God reconciled Catholics and Protestants in Northern

Ireland, Jews and Palestinians in the Middle East, communists and capitalists in Central America, white and black in South Africa, Shona and Ndebele in Zimbabwe, liberals and conservatives in America? Who will tell them?

***4. The model for our unity is the Trinity.*** Jesus prayed that "those who will believe in me . . . may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you, . . . that they may be one as we are one" (John 17:20-23. See also Gen. 1:26). Jesus prays that our relationship to each other would be like his relationship with the Father.

***5. Our unity provides part of the foundation for evangelism.*** Christ prays for our unity "so that the world may believe" (John 17:21). He predicted that all will know that we are his disciples if we love one another as he loved us (John 13:34-35).

There are Brethren in Christ congregations where Jesus' plan for evangelism is working. I think of one especially where people are being drawn to the church because they see how the believers love each other. At another place two of the new couples are coming because they were impressed by a marriage reconciliation which God effected through the ministries of the congregation.

In one Brethren in Christ congregation, people were praying about the financial distress of one of the families. Someone came to the pastor with a cashier's check of \$17,000.00 one day because the Lord had laid it on his heart to answer that prayer. The pastor smiled when he told me, "No one in the congregation would ever guess who it was." He emphasized that this was not the only incident of its kind, just the biggest.

***6. Our unity in Christ is the inevitable result of true evangelism.*** We are some-

times told that God has no grandchildren; each of us needs to be reconciled to God. It is also true that, except for Jesus, God has no only child.

God's question to Cain is always with us, "Where is your brother?" I've never heard of anyone in New Testament times or since who became a Christian without some human instrumentality. Whenever anyone comes to Christ, a brother or sister is always involved, usually many brothers and sisters.

***7. Everyone is important.*** None of us dare say to anyone else, "I don't need you." We need to hear each other's concerns. God has chosen to speak to us through one another. The body needs what each person has to give. If we listen carefully, we will learn things from those most different from ourselves that we would never learn from those most similar to us.

Two years ago several people were led to begin a class in our Sunday school for retarded adults. I thought of it as a worthy charity, something that was good for us to do for needy people. I've been amazed to realize how much they have contributed to our church. They've taught how much they have contributed to our church. They've taught us a lot about loving and accepting. We needed them at least as much as they needed us.





Paul Schrock

## Now he has given to us the ministry of reconciliation

### Action

But celebrating our unity alone will not evangelize the world. Thankfully God does more than unite us. He helps us change our behavior.

As Brethren in Christ we have heard the call to be doers. "Do everything without complaining or arguing" (Philippians 2:14). "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them" (John 13:17). "If anyone loves me he will obey my teaching" (John 14:23).

Bernard Ramm notes that Anabaptists have not put their theology in huge tomes. For Anabaptists, "Christianity does not need ponderous theology; it is passionate discipleship"<sup>2</sup> I rejoice that we seek to maintain the biblical relationship between action and beliefs.

If we aren't doing what we know, we eventually will not know what we are doing. Consider the alarm clock illustration. Maybe you never learned it from experience, but I've turned off the alarm sometimes and gone back to sleep. If you do that about two or three mornings in succession, you know what happens—you no longer know what you are doing!

Luke says, "the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purposes for themselves, because they had not been

baptized by John" (Luke 7:30). They had turned off John's alarm and when Jesus came preaching, they did not hear him. But the common people, even the despised tax collectors, "when they heard Jesus' words acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John." They obeyed John's preaching and continued obeying when they heard Jesus.

In Jesus' story about the rich man and Lazarus, Abraham tells the rich man, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31). Indeed, when Jesus rose from the dead, they didn't believe. It is a very dangerous thing to turn off the alarms of the prophets, even though they are annoying and their timing is sometimes atrocious (they wake us up when we want to sleep).

### Integration

But union and action are not enough. A Faith and Order Conference at Montreal some years ago emphasized unity and activity. Someone remarked that it reminded him of what one Gadarene pig said to another Gadarene pig as they ran violently down a steep place into the Sea of Galilee, "I don't know where we are going, but I do know this: we must all keep moving and we must all stay together." We must do better than that. In addition to unity and activity, we must have integrity.

1. *The integration of all things.* One of the things God does in reconciling all things to himself is to help us know that some things are more important than others, and that *he* is infinitely more important. Jesus warned against straining out gnats while swallowing camels, and tithing herb leaves and seeds while ignoring justice, mercy and faithfulness

(Matthew 23:23, 24). He also chided those who diligently study "the Scriptures that testify about me, yet . . . refuse to come to me to have life" (John 5:39).

Even great truths can become idols. Some devout Jewish thinkers condemn the use of the words "Christian Jew" as self-contradictory. They have elevated the first commandment to the point that it hinders any consideration of Jesus as *the* son of God. If even the doctrine of the oneness of God can become an idolatry that may prevent God's revealing himself in Christ, we obviously need God's help to reconcile all things to him.

Heresy is often merely an overemphasis on some truth. The Good News Bible tells us that "in union with Christ all things have their proper place" (Colossians 1:17).

Freedom may be one of the idolatries in our culture. Some advocates of abortion on demand say that a woman should have freedom to do as she pleases with her own body. Others in our culture are willing, in defense of freedom, to abort the whole human race in a nuclear holocaust.<sup>3</sup>

2. *Integration.* Consider Colossians 1:15-29, one of the New Testament passages using the word "reconcile." Paul tells of Jesus, the image of the invisible God, the one in whom all things hold together. God was pleased "through him to reconcile to himself all things . . . Once you were alienated from God and were *enemies in your minds* because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you. . . ."

Paul told the Romans that when people know God but do not glorify him as God, their *thinking* becomes futile (Romans 1:21). Then they not only do evil things, but "also approve of those who practice them" (Romans 1:32). That is

*next page, please*



certainly a description of our generation. The good news is that the damage done by sin can be reversed. Our minds can be re-integrated. Faith and learning can meet when Christ is preeminent.

When God reconciles us to himself, it is not just a legal action, it is a real transformation. Our minds have been damaged because of our evil behavior. God restores our minds so that we are no longer double-minded and unstable (James 1:8).

3. *Integrity in our speech.* It is not enough to be polite while plunging down life's perilous path together. Politeness is love in little things; ethics is love in bigger things. Loving reassurance is often appropriate, but our speech, should pass two tests—it should be both loving and truthful (Ephesians 4:15). Jesus managed to achieve both.

One thing that would help us would be to use more often a response to questions that Jesus needed to use only once, "I don't know" (Matthew 24:36). We can also remember to avoid wasting mental energy trying to "know" things he specifically told his disciples were not for them to know (Acts 1:7).

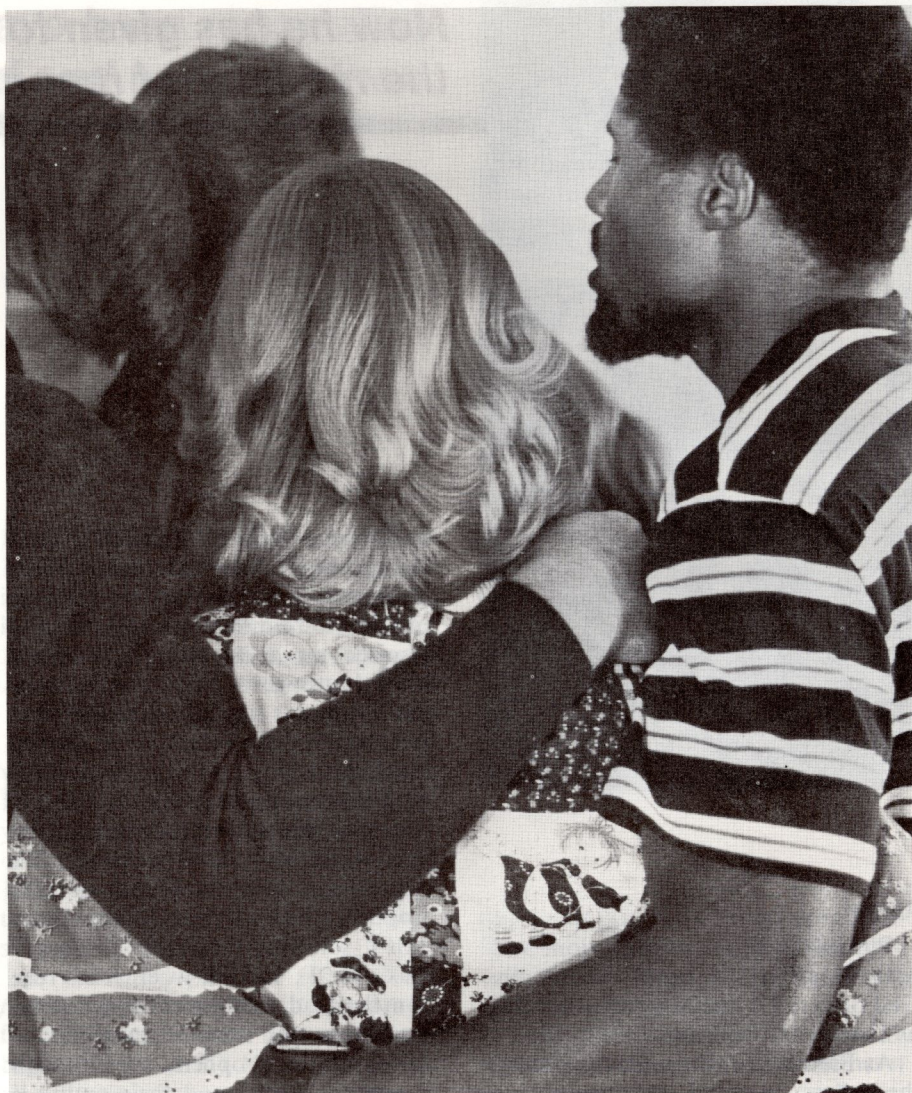
4. *Integrity in our relationships.* The Scriptures clearly tell us that there are some things we are to keep between ourselves and God (Romans 14:22). However, even more clearly we are told to gently restore one who is caught in a sin (Galatians 6:1).

Fortunately we have some great biblical models like Nathan with David, and Jesus with Peter. Occasionally in a committee meeting, if someone mentions a fault in a person not present, I'm inclined to say, "You've said that about him; perhaps you need to say it to him."

5. *Integrity in our proclamation of the word of reconciliation.* The message of reconciliation is what God has done and is doing through Jesus Christ—his life, death and resurrection—and through the church, which is his body in the world now.

We are to "hold out the word of life" (Philippians 2:16). It is not enough to model God's reconciliation, we must preach what we practice. We must talk our walk. We have good news that the world desperately needs.

Maintaining the integrity of the message involves piety and obedience. Faith is exercised through works. While like true Arminians we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, like good Calvinists we remember that it is God who works in us to will and to act



according to his good purpose (Philippians 2:13).

### Reconciliation of the World

The ministry of reconciliation is more than knowing and preaching the message of reconciliation, more than doing acts of reconciliation, and more than modeling the unity that comes through reconciliation. We have been reconciled to God and to each other. Now he has given to us the ministry of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:18). As he was sent into the world, so he sends us into the world (John 17: 18, 20-21).

I think the reason more of the world is not reconciled to God is that we too often stop ministering because of the cost. It is not easy to humble ourselves to become obedient even to death, even to death on a cross (Philippians 2:8). The way of the cross leads home. The way of the cross is God's way of reconciliation, God's way of peace.

There are techniques of conflict resolution that we can and should learn from

the social sciences. Biblical principles (a soft answer turns away wrath), common sense (honey draws more flies than vinegar), and trial and error can help achieve smoother relationships. But those things are not going to reconcile the world to God, nor heal the alienation in the world. The Scriptures make it clear that there is no other way except through Christ and his death, and our taking up the cross and following him, even to death.

God's plan for the reconciliation of the world has not failed. As G. K. Chesterton wrote, "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left untried."<sup>4</sup> At least it has not been tried in any worldwide application since the first couple of hundred years. Then the Christians moved up in society and the understanding of what it meant to be a Christian changed.

We have a big problem when we cease being poor and powerless—the way the early church was. The Gospel does us so



much good. When people come to Christ they live differently. They tend to have more things because they take better care of themselves and the things they have. For some God-ordained reason, when we learn to give appropriately, we tend to have even more. What do we do then when we become wealthy?

Are we wealthy? How many of us have another suit of clothes in addition to the one we are wearing? If so, we are among the wealthy. How many of us ate three meals yesterday? We are among the rich. How many of us can read, write and do arithmetic? We are among the upper class. So all the words of Jesus about how hard it is for a rich man to get into the Kingdom of Heaven apply to us. As a citizen of the major power in this world that is a democracy, I'm one of the rulers of this world. So the words in the Bible about rulers and kings apply to me.

This is a great story from a World War II prison camp in China called Shantung Compound.<sup>5</sup> In January, 1945, 1,550 huge boxes of food were hauled into the camp, sent by the American Red Cross to supply 1,450 civilian prisoners, two hundred of whom were Americans. The rest were of other nationalities, mostly business and professional people, including missionaries.

It was an opportunity for celebration—a wealth of food in the middle of winter. The Japanese officer in charge of the prison camp decreed that everyone would receive one of the boxes, and since they had come from America, the Americans would each have one and one-half boxes.

The majority of Americans said that wasn't fair; since the boxes had come from America, they all should be divided among them. (That would have been more than seven boxes each.) The Japanese commander cancelled the distribution and awaited a decision from Tokyo.

Some of the Americans tried unsuccessfully to prove that this was not a majority opinion. One interview went like this. "We Americans should be given the parcels. We will share."

"How many parcels do you really suppose the Americans will share with others?"

"I'm sure that most of us will give away at least two." (That would have been over 25%, far more than a tithe!)

I don't read anywhere that Jesus invites us to calculate carefully our percentages, but instead to take up the cross and follow him—to death! That's the

way of reconciliation. I've been part of some reconciliations that have been very costly to me and to others. Paul also knew something about sacrifice and suffering on his way to resurrection and victory. He followed one of his last writings on reconciliation with these words, "Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's affliction, for the sake of his body, which is the church" (Colossians 1:24).

We do not have the option to avoid suffering. "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (II Timothy 3:12). Our choice is between suffering on offense, against the gates of hell, or on defense, when we've decided we dare retreat no further. I pray to be allowed to do more of my suffering on offense; it's so much more rewarding. (The discovery that divorce

is no less painful than reconciliation is one example and a strong encouragement when assisting in efforts to heal a broken or breaking marriage.)

It is so tempting to reduce the ministry of reconciliation to fit the price we are prepared to pay; to emphasize John 3:16, for example, and to ignore John 3:17. But the temptation is deceitful. The cross is not greater than his grace. Besides, if we suffer with him, we will also reign with him. ■

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Charles Colson, *Born Again*. Spire Books, pp. 146, 150).

<sup>2</sup>*Eternity*, September 1981, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup>*Eternity*, June 1980, pp. 16, 17.

<sup>4</sup>G. K. Chesterton, "What's Wrong with the World" (1910), Part One, Chapter 5.

<sup>5</sup>Langdon Gilkey, *Shantung Compound*. Harper and Row, 1966. pp. 96-116.

## Points to Ponder

*The following questions are designed to stimulate individual thought or for use in group discussions. Group leaders should select those questions they feel are most appropriate for their particular group.*

1. What does Brubaker say is directly responsible for man's alienation from God? What is the solution?
2. What do each of the following scriptures say about reconciliation?
 

Romans 15:7	Romans 15:3
Ephesians 4:32	I John 2:6 and 3:16
John 13:34	2 Corinthians 5:17-18
John 17:18; 20:21	Ephesians 2:15-16
3. Sometimes our faith and the faith of an inquirer are not great enough to overcome barriers of prejudice. Do our local congregations sometimes adjust our methods of evangelism to that limitation, emphasizing homogeneity? Should we?
4. How willing is your local congregation to allow people who are "different" (sociologically, economically, politically, theoretically, etc.) to influence them?
5. Mere politeness sometimes characterizes our efforts to affect reconciliation. Discuss the danger that avoiding necessary and honest confrontation may prevent our being "light" and "salt" to (a) the world, and (b) our Christian brothers and sisters.
6. What are some of the ways we "turn off the alarm clocks" in our Christian lives?
7. What is integrity as it applies to the Christian walk? Does integrity help or hinder us as ministers of reconciliation?
8. What are some of the great truths of the great which tend to become "idols?" How do we guard against overemphasis of certain doctrines?
9. What do you think Brubaker means, "Politeness is love in little things; ethics is love in bigger things?"
10. Discuss Brubaker's statement, "Our choice is between suffering on offense against the gates of hell or on defense when we've decided we dare retreat no further. I pray to be allowed to do more of my suffering on offense; it's so much more rewarding."



**C**ome ye yourselves apart . . . and rest awhile . . ." (Mark 6:31). We need to come apart before we fall apart. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. These and other expressions like them give the rationale for vacations. What is a vacation? "A period of time devoted to pleasure, rest or relaxation; a change in routine." One type of vacation is camping, sparking the title for this article, "God Goes Camping Too." Probably more is intended in the idea than camping, but to title an article, "God Takes a Vacation," would get us into all sorts of difficulty.

Not many people would say, "Don't take any vacations!" Some might oppose the time involved. Perhaps some pastors would object to taking a vacation that extends through Sunday. As a pastor myself, I know the pressures of filing reports showing June, July and August attendance lower than the yearly average. Yet I do agree with the rationale for taking a vacation. As one who cares for the total health of each of my people, I endorse vacations. Everyone needs a period of time

for pleasure, rest, and relaxation. Muscles, minds, and even spirits can stand constant pressure only so long before they snap, unless the strain is released.

When we take a vacation, we take along our bodies. They need to be fed. We take along our minds. They need to be fed. We take along our spirits. They need to be fed. Therefore, we need to plan our vacation carefully. Where can we buy food? Will we be able to get it prepared or must we prepare it? Where will we sleep? Will we sleep in beds, bunks, or bags? If you have gone on a camping rip or vacation, you have probably asked those questions. But have you also asked the following: How will we worship? Where will we worship?

Our primary plan for food may be: "I'll go fishing first thing and you'll wake up to the smell of fish frying and coffee boiling." No fish and wet wood may cancel the primary plan. A half-hour drive to find a McDonalds or Pizza Hut will likely meet the need but not give the hoped-for result. Similarly, the primary plan may be: "Find a church around



# God goes camping too

by Earl Herr



somewhere." If seeing folks coming out as you plan to go in cancels the primary plan, a quick "you-read-a-few-verses-and-pray-while-I-drive" may meet the need, but it will not give the hoped-for result.

Suppose you decide to go camping for your vacation. God goes camping too. He goes with you. God has been involved in many outdoor and camping experiences. I will quickly mention ten of them:

*Wilderness camping:* Deuteronomy 8:2; Luke 9:10; Revelation 17:3

*Fishing:* John 21:4; Matthew 4:18, 19; Matthew 13:48

*On the sea:* Exodus 14:13; Jonah 1; Acts 27:23

*Sightseeing:* Genesis 2:9; Exodus 3:3; Acts 7:31

*Flying:* 2 Samuel 22:11; Psalms 63:7; Psalms 139:9

*At the shore:* Matthew 13:2; Mark 2:13; Mark 4:1

*In the mountains:* 2 Kings 6:17; Exodus 19:3; Matthew 5:1

*Near palm trees:* Deuteronomy 34:3; Exodus 15:27

*On a boat:* Mark 4:38; 8:13; John 6:21; Matthew 8:23

*On the sand:* Genesis 22:17; 2 Samuel 17:11; Revelation 20:8

What will you do with all those texts, both familiar and obscure? Let me develop one—Camping in the Mountains (2 Kings 6:17). First of all, read the whole passage that surrounds the verse. Ask these questions: Why was God there? What did he accomplish? Next, look at the people in the story. Why were they there? What did they do? Now look around yourself. Is God there? What is he accomplishing? Who are the people? What can God do through them? These questions can be asked of almost any Scripture in almost any place. Try now to see if there is anything extra in the passage you chose. There is in this one. Elisha prayed that God would open the eyes of his servant. What a tremendous prayer for us to pray, just where we are: "Lord, open our eyes here to see you and what you are doing." Now, relax a bit. Let your mind and spirit openly wonder toward the Lord. This nameless young man saw something he never expected to see. Why? Because the prayer, "Open his eyes," had been answered. God will answer your prayers too, if you let him.

We pretty much see what we expect to see. We drive down life's highways and see litter in the gutter, or crazy drivers, or forests, fields, and streams. We sit on life's beaches and see seaweed or driftwood, or wild children racing all over the place, or the majesty of the timeless rolling sea. The Russian cosmonaut orbited the earth but didn't see God. He was not looking for him with the eyes of faith. For those who would see God and his majestic hand, he can be seen with a telescope or a microscope. God is the God of the magnificent and of the minute. We must look for him. We must want to see him. We must not want to get away from him but to get away to him.

One of the most exciting things about camping for me some years ago was that we could shut out the things that reminded us of this world and its systems—no radios, no TV's, no newspapers. In week-long youth camp sessions, we tried to surround boys and girls with Christian adults who would talk about God and live out godly examples before them. Of course we failed sometimes, but we also succeeded sometimes.

We should note a primary difference between God and Satan at this point. Satan will bombard you, smother you,

hound you, push you, pull you, and keep you so busy you can't think. God will stand there, waiting for you. Isn't that why Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest"? God has filled his universe with all kinds of wonder-full things for us to enjoy. Satan keeps us so busy we can't or don't see them. Most of us are just too busy.

Even back at camp, we were often too busy to appreciate some of God's creation and creatures. One summer a family of chipmunks lived within thirty feet of the main lodge. Yet I doubt that anyone else saw them. At 5:45 a.m., while I sat on the steps with my Bible in hand, it was quiet enough for them to be scampering all about. I could watch them until the waking bell rang; then it got so noisy and busy that the chipmunks disappeared, staying out of sight the rest of the day. They were afraid to come out of hiding. I'm not sure I blame them. I know that God is not in hiding and if he were, he is not afraid to come out. But we get so busy, we just can't seem to see him or the beauty he has created. We need to stop and rest and look around at his universe.

Camping with a loved one or loved ones is a tremendous idea. You get a chance to talk, to communicate, with fewer than usual interruptions. A husband and wife need this kind of time together. We need time to talk over our hopes, our dreams, our goals. We need to review our progress toward our goals set earlier. And, since God is also our Loved One, we need to talk things over with him as well. When you go camping or wherever you go to get pleasure, relaxation and rest, why not take along a list of things you want to talk over with God. Be prepared to listen. He may have a list too.

Here are some further suggestions to increase the productivity of your camping trip:

*What to do before you go:* 1) stop the paper; 2) ask the neighbors to look after the house; 3) turn down the thermostat; 4) pay tithes to the church; 5) pray for the church.

*What to take along:* 1) money; 2) sleeping bags; 3) gas stove; 4) insect repellent; 5) Bible, notebook, pencils; 6) Bible quizzes and games if the children go along.

*What to bring back:* 1) souvenirs for the children; 2) gift for the neighbor; 3) bulletin for the pastor; 4) testimony of God's goodness and his presence for fellow believers; 5) renewed body, mind and spirit to serve God better.

Of course you will want to add to those lists a bit. But you can see that there are some things I am firmly convinced you need to take along.

When soldiers go to camp, they go to one of several different kinds. In boot camp they learn the basic skills needed to be good soldiers. In A.I.T. camp they receive advanced individual training, instructions on how to carry out their mission. And when they have been in conflict, they go to a rest and rehabilitation camp (R&R) to prepare to go back into conflict. We are also in a warfare, although it is not against flesh and blood. We need time alone with our Commander in Chief and with those who are by our sides, so that we are prepared for the battle. We also need to be rested and refreshed by our Commander, so we can be most effective for him.

God goes camping, too. He goes with you and for you. ■

*Earl Herr pastors the Martinsburg (Pa.) congregation. This article is adapted from a workshop given at the Allegheny Conference seminar on Christian education in September 1982.*



## Establishing a tradition

# Congregational *family camping*

by Deborah McCoy

It's that time of year again. Spring is here and summer is just around the corner. You're planning your family vacation. This year, you're going to try something new and different. You're going camping with your family—your church family that is.

By now you may be somewhat skeptical. Camping? With other families? I can share your skepticism. Three years ago, our family made the decision to take a camping vacation with our congregation. We had never camped before, let alone done it with other families. We didn't even own any camping equipment at that time. Yet, here I am, with two church camping vacations to my credit. I'd like to share some of our

congregational camping experiences with you.

The idea of a church camping trip originated at the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church over eight years ago. Eight families participated the first year. In 1979, we were joined by families from the Harrisburg Brethren in Christ Church. Last year, we had a combined total of forty families. What initially began as a three-day weekend in August has since grown to five days, with several families arriving up to one week in advance.

We chose to vacation at a campground near Cape May, New Jersey. This quiet, Victorian community has been designated a national historic land-

mark. The area provides us with clean, well-protected beaches, miles of flat roads for biking, and a small state park complete with a lighthouse dating back to 1859.

Our group has used the same background each year. We maintain a good reputation with the owners and employees. They have come to know what to expect from us. Also, by returning to the same area each year, family traditions are easily established. Watching the sunrise at the beach has become a yearly event for our family. It doesn't matter that we can see the sun rise anywhere. It has become special to our children because it is linked to this church camping trip. The area has become familiar, like a well-read book.

A variety of camping equipment is represented in the group, from pup tents to a self-contained unit. Some families borrow or rent equipment; others share camp sites. Our pop-up camper is a "third generation" camper. Its two previous owners are members of our congregation.

There are always opportunities for sharing and helping within the group, whether it's advice, an extra pair of hands, financial aid, or even a catch of blue fish. By living together for a few days, we also develop memories to share with each other.

Our family has found that camping is an inexpensive alternative to hotel accommodations. Meal preparation can be simple or elaborate. Most of our meals are prepared in advance, frozen and stored in a large ice chest. We replenish the ice as necessary, and additional food

**Cleaning the catch of blue fish from the night before.**







A typical campsite at Lake Laurie Campground, Cape May, New Jersey.

items can be bought in the camp store or in a supermarket a few miles from camp. What could be easier than roasting hot dogs over a campfire?

There is almost no housekeeping involved with camping once you've set up. Any crumbs of food dropped to the ground are quickly consumed by waiting chipmunks. Anyone with a compulsive need to sweep can always bring a broom or borrow one. That's one of the advantages of traveling with a group. Someone always has that something you've forgotten to pack.

One reason for the enduring popularity of this trip is that the days are unstructured. We can do whatever we feel like doing. An informal church service on Sunday morning, which often attracts other campers also, is the only event regularly scheduled. As a group, we often spend the day together on the beach playing volleyball, rafting on the waves, or "burying" children in the sand. However, it isn't unusual for a family to spend an afternoon alone together, picnicking or looking for shells along a secluded beach. The option is always there to enjoy as much or as little group interaction as is desired.

Spontaneity is also an important part of the trip, whether it means a fast-paced game of volleyball back at the campground or a group cruise around the cape at twilight. We often gather at someone's campfire for some impromptu singing, or just to talk quietly into the night while sharing a watermelon, fresh steamed ears of corn, or "s'mores."

Children benefit greatly from the group experiences. Their friends from

Sunday school are nearby to play with every day. Because we occupy three rows of campsites, the children can safely walk from one site to another when visiting friends.

As a church family, many of us have been impressed by the amount of interaction that occurs between younger children and the teenagers. These two age groups often do not have the opportunity to be together in a church setting. While camping together, the children can see firsthand how Christian youth interact with their families and other teenagers. Often a special friendship develops between a child and a teen, a friendship which continues back home at church.

The joys of outdoor living are yet another benefit. Fresh air and soft evening breezes are always abundant, and listening to the gentle sounds of raindrops on the tent can be soothing—unless it leaks! Then, after a night of rain, what could be nicer than waking up to the early morning sounds of birds as they feed?

One couple in our congregation felt it was especially nice to begin camping as a young family. Their memories have grown as the family has grown up. Whether the family is young or not, this time of vacationing together with the church becomes a celebration and a tradition, a recurring pattern where fun and fellowship are enjoyed. In the middle of the winter blahs, it is not unusual to hear campers talking at church, already looking forward to and planning for the next trip. With the completion of each shore camping experience, new

traditions are established, family life is strengthened, lasting friendships are formed, and the feeling of being a part of a larger family (the church) grows. We encourage your congregation to try it!

*Deborah McCoy lives in Harrisburg, Pa., with her husband and two young sons. They attend the Grantham congregation.*



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# church news

Among those observing the groundbreaking were children from the Children's Family Center.

## Messiah Village Chapel groundbreaking



Enthusiastic applause acknowledged Anna Zercher's efforts recently when she turned the first spade of dirt for Messiah Village's new \$800,000 chapel wing expansion. Assisting her were board chairman Charles L. Lehman and administrator George K. Kibler.

At 101 years of age, Annie is the oldest resident of Messiah Village. In spite of her advanced years, she has only been part of the Village "family" for about five years.

Also participating in groundbreaking was a child from the Children's Family Center—the intergenerational day care program at Messiah Village—and Rev. LeRoy B. Walters, chaplain/pastor.

The Children's Family Center will gain new and enlarged facilities as part of the expansion program. Additional

office area, recreational space and a greenhouse will be part of the new chapel wing.

A freewill offering of over \$4,000 was received from the more than 300 people who attended groundbreaking ceremonies, plus a matching gift of \$1,000 from Lois, Sheldon, and Gerald Weaver of Woodbury, Pa.

More than \$550,000 has now been received for the project, with the balance being sought before the anticipated completion of construction in early 1984. Horst Construction of New Holland, Pa., will be the general contractor.

When asked by a reporter from one of the two television stations covering the event what advice she would have for younger persons, Annie quickly replied, "Live for today and let the Lord take care of tomorrow."

—Carl Keefer

### Brethren in Christ Historical Society

## CALENDAR

**June 5, 3 p.m.** in the Ringgold Meeting House, Ringgold, Maryland. An early Brethren in Christ worship service will be conducted, with Alden Long preaching the sermon. For directions to the meeting house, write to the Brethren in Christ Historical Society, Grantham, PA 17027.

**June 16, 7:30 p.m.** at the Lancaster Brethren in Christ Church, the annual meeting of the Brethren in Christ Historical Society will be held. Ray Zercher will give a slide presentation on evolving Brethren in Christ church architecture and Myron Dietz of the Old Order River Brethren will speak on house churches.

### Atlantic Conference

The Conoy congregation, Elizabethtown, Pa., reports that 80 persons were present for their sweet-heart banquet on Friday evening, Feb. 18. Dr. Richard Stevick, psychology teacher at Messiah College, was the guest speaker and Debbie Miller, former Dairy Princess of Pennsylvania, presented special music. • A recent guest of the Harrisburg congregation, Pa., was **Arlene Miller**, secretary for Home Ministries. She shared at the monthly Missions Prayer Fellowship. Six persons were baptized after they participated in the "On Your Way" class which was taught by Rod Chamberlain.

The club ministries of the Palmyra congregation, Pa., held a Mother's Night recently. Mothers of the club members were invited to visit on a Wednesday night to see firsthand how the club meetings are held. A Father's Night was also held. • Sunday, Feb. 13, was designated as Firemen's Sunday by the Silverdale congregation, Pa. Breakfast was served at the firehouse and then the firemen and their families attended the worship services together.

Nearly 60 persons participated in Guess Who's

Coming to Dinner, an exchange meal on Sunday evening, Feb. 27, by the Skyline View congregation, Harrisburg, Pa. It was a time of fellowship in homes of the congregation. • A dinner for Christian workers was held by the Speedwell Heights congregation, Lititz, Pa., on Sunday evening, Feb. 20.

### Allegheny Conference

Approximately thirty missionaries attended a fellowship lunch which was held by the Carlisle congregation, Pa., as part of their missions festival on March 5 and 6. **Rachel Kibler** prepared an African dinner for the ladies of the congregation on March 1, in preparation for the missions weekend. • John White from Geneva College, Pa., was the speaker for the spiritual life meetings held on Feb. 15-17, by the Grantham congregation, Pa.

The Green Grove, Pa., congregation reports receiving three persons into fellowship on Sunday morning, Feb. 20. • The Willing Workers Sunday School Class of the Martinsburg congregation, Pa., prepared an appreciation meal for the Christian education staff on Tuesday evening, March 15. The Junior High Class served the meal and **Pastor Earl Lehman** gave a message. • A concert was given to the Ridgevue congregation, Etters, Pa., on Sunday evening, March 13, by the New Freedom Singers.

A recent guest of the Shermans Valley congregation, Hopewell, Pa., was **Rev. Dale Ulery** on Sunday evening, Feb. 20. He gave a report on his recent trip to Haiti. • The Spring Hope congregation, Pa., reports that the Wingert Family Singers presented a program on Sunday evening, April 24.

### Central Conference

**Phyllis Engle** held a missions meeting with the Amherst congregation, Massillon, Oh., on Wednesday evening, Feb. 27. Phyllis is the librarian at the David Livingstone Teachers' College in Zambia. • Missions Day was observed by the Christian Union congregation, Garrett, In., on Sunday, March. 20. The entire morning worship service had a missions theme, with **Pastor Rick Mailoux's** message being, "Are Missionaries Mad?"

The Dayton congregation, Oh., reports viewing the film "John Hus" in February. The showing of the film concluded youth week. • A Spring Sing was enjoyed by the Mooretown congregation, Sandusky, Mi., on Sunday evening, March 13. The Junior and Cherub Choirs presented a concert with a special puppet play which told the Easter story.

The Morrison congregation, Il., held a Sunday school growth workshop on April 15-17. **Winnie Swalm**, Christian Education director, conducted the 3-day workshop. • A sacred concert was given to the Pleasant Hill congregation, Oh., by the Snyder Sisters on Sunday evening, March 6. The group is composed of four sisters and three accompanists.

The Rolling Acres congregation, McMinnville, Tn., held a surprise service for Mr. and Mrs. Robert Slaymaker on Saturday evening. A plaque was given to the couple in appreciation for their 10 years of service as deacon couple. The film, "Sand Castles" was shown. • Recent guests of the West-

Evangelical Visitor



ern Hills congregation, Cincinnati, Oh., were Rev. and Mrs. Ira Stern, missionaries in Zambia, and Kent Byer, who is serving as a VSer in the missions office in Pennsylvania.

## Canadian Conference

Jews for Jesus presented a special presentation, "Christ in the Passover," to the Cross Roads congregation, Cambridge, Ont., on Sunday, Feb. 13. • A church growth seminar was led by Winnie Swalm on Feb. 19-20, at the Falls View Church, Niagara Falls, Ont. It was a time of reassessment and fellowship of the growth seminary held in June of 1981.

The Massey Place Church, Saskatoon, Sask., viewed a music/slide presentation on Sunday evening, March 13, depicting the life and ministry of the congregation. • Six fellowship dinners were held for the teens of the Port Colborne Church, Ont., from Jan. 9-Mar. 20. The dinner meetings were held in various homes of the congregation with the final one including an evaluation time at the church.

The Rosebank congregation, Petersburg, Ont., reports that two persons were received into fellowship recently. • Feb. 14, was "Big Hug" Sunday, at the Sherston Church, Ont. The children from the Beginner and Kindergarten Departments visited the adult Sunday school classes. They shared cookies that they had baked with the adults, accompanied by a "big hug."

## Midwest Conference

Four persons were recently received into fellowship by the Bethany congregation, Thomas, Ok. Three were baptized at the same time. • The Mountain View congregation, Colorado Springs, Co., has sent out Easter letters to all of their church families. Enclosed were "money bags" for each member of the family, encouraging each one to give to the "30 Pieces of Silver" offering on Easter Sunday.

A meeting for Christian education workers was held by the Zion congregation, Abilene, Ks. Ken Letner, associate director of the denomination's Board of Christian Education, was the speaker.

## Pacific Conference

Special guest of the adult Sunday school department of the Ontario congregation, Ca., on Palm Sunday, March 27, was Dr. Tim Gust, Casa Colima Hospital. He discussed "Rehabilitation: Crisis or Opportunity."

Members of the Labish congregation, Salem, Or., were given \$5.00 each to invest for three months for missions. Twenty-nine people received the investment money at the initial meeting on Sunday, Feb. 27. • The Upland congregation, Ca., reports 21 persons were received into fellowship on Sunday, Feb. 13. Ten persons were baptized the following Sunday.

## Corrections

Three corrections should be noted in the March issue. Under Church News (p. 22), the attendance figures for the Oklahoma City church should have been 23 persons in four Bible studies, with an average Sunday morning attendance of 24. The obituary for H. Smith Elser was incorrectly printed as Elser H. Smith. And apologies are due Rev. LeRoy B. Walters, pastor and chaplain at Messiah Village. In a footnote on page 4 of the March issue, we inadvertently "retired" him from pastoral service.

May, 1983

# 1983 REPORT CAMP FREEDOM

Camp Freedom 1983 was a wonderful camp, one of the best camps I have attended at St. Petersburg, Fla. The attendance for this year was 5.95% above last year, with a number of people who had never been to Camp Freedom before. It is always stimulating to see new people.

The preaching was outstanding, with Charlie B. Byers from Chambersburg, Pa., and Dr. Noel Scott from Ava, Missouri, as co-evangelists. Under the anointed preaching many people came to the altar seeking spiritual and physical help. We praise the Lord for those who received healing to their bodies and those who received spiritual help. It was a time for growing in the Lord.

Wilfred and Rachel Edwards were the special musicians for the camp. The Lord used them in many ways to bless the services, both with congregational singing and special music. Their daughter Esther and son Johnathan came to help the last weekend of camp. The first weekend Hobe Sound Chapel Choir and quartet brought great blessing to the camp. On Wednesday evening a ladies trio from Penns View Bible Institute added to the service. God's Bible School

quartet from Cincinnati, Oh., also added inspiration to our services. Rev. Hermon Noll, public relations director, was along to share in these services.

We attribute much of the success of the camp to the many who attend the morning prayer services, directed by Rev. Bedsaul Agee and Rev. Homer Rissinger, as well as the evening prayer service.

Missions day was something unusual as the presence of the Lord was very manifest. Phyllis Engle, Don Zook, Clara Leedom, Rachel Edwards, and Dale Ulery all portrayed the great needs of our world. The offering was the largest missions offering taken at Camp Freedom.

Jennie Rensberry from Canada and Jack Hooker from St. Petersburg were youth leaders. Approximately 30 young people attended. There were prayer and share times, singing and snack time each evening after services, scavenger hunts, games and Bible quizzes.

The food is known to be very good at Camp Freedom, thanks to Rhoda and Earl Lehman and their helpers. And thanks to our Camp Director, Rev. Simon Lehman, who does a superb job.

The weather was on the cool side but delightful. We will be looking for you at Camp Freedom next year.

Reported by John Rosenberry

## For The Record

### Births

**Bearss:** Craig Andrew, Nov. 10, 1982; Larry and Susan Bearss, Falls View congregation, Ont.

**Daley:** Jennifer Jean, Feb. 4; Doug and Jeanie Daley, Alta Loma congregation, Ca.

**Denlinger:** Amy Lynn, Feb. 20; Ed and Linda Denlinger, Manor congregation, Pa.

**DeWaard:** Tamara Joy, Feb. 16; Marc and Kathy DeWaard, Westheights congregation, Ont.

**Dressler:** Robert Allen, Jr., Feb. 6; Robert and Kathy Dressler, Cedar Grove congregation, Pa.

**Evans:** Jeremy Joseph, Feb. 8; Harry and Christine (Martinec) Evans, Green Grove congregation, Pa.

**Fackler:** Erin Elizabeth, March 14; John and Carla Fackler, Elizabethtown congregation, Pa.

**Frey:** Justin Mark, Feb. 6; Ted and Dot Frey, Manor congregation, Pa.

**Funk:** Jordan Douglas, Feb. 24; Doug and Linda Funk, Manor congregation, Pa.

**Hendershot:** Andrew Kenneth, Jan. 19; Earl and Carol (Slagenweit) Hendershot, Warfordsburg, Pa.

**Henry:** Randall Lee, March 6; Ron and Phyllis (Bledsoe) Henry, Garden City, Ks.

**Jurkovich:** Sarah Michal, Feb. 6; Dale and Nancy Jurkovich, Sippo Valley congregation, Oh.

**Keefer:** Jamie Faye, Feb. 27; Ed and Kim Keefer, Skyline View congregation, Pa.

**Kiss:** Aindrea Lynn, June 18, 1982; Frank and Kathleen Kiss Jr., Wainfleet congregation, Ont.

**Lane:** Jason Andrew, Feb. 14; Chester and Shirley Lane, Falls View congregation, Ont.

**Marr:** Erin Louise, March 6; Roy and Linda Marr, Wainfleet congregation, Ont.

**O'Brien:** Cassandra Elizabeth, Dec. 27, 1982; Rick and Cindie O'Brien, Wainfleet congregation, Ont.

**Rogers:** Jennifer Grace, March 10; Tom and Joyce Rogers, Waynesboro congregation, Pa.

**Schock:** Nicole Lynn, Feb. 12; Dick and Sharon Schock, Manor congregation, Pa.

**Sechrist:** Andrew Jeffrey, Jan. 29; chosen by Jeffrey and Constance Sechrist, Pleasant View congregation, Pa.

**Spurrier:** Rachel Irene and Naomi Ruth, Jan. 1; James and Faithe (Dourte) Spurrier, Houghton College, N.Y.

**Stoner:** Benjamin Ambrose, March 2; John and Trudy (Kaiser) Stoner, New Guilford congregation, Pa.

**Tice:** Michael Allen, Jan. 24; Timothy and Sandy (Richardson) Tice, Green Grove congregation, Pa.

**Yarchin:** Molly Ann, March 7; Bill and Ann Yarchin, Upland congregation, Ca.

**Yoder:** Daniel Jacob, Feb. 18; chosen by Sam and Barb (Sollenberger) Yoder, Air Hill congregation, Pa.



## Weddings

**Asper-Whitesel:** Leona Elaine, daughter of Mrs. Mildred P. Whitesel, and Clayton Paul, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ellis Asper, Feb. 19, in the Harrisburg, Pa., Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Glenn Dalton officiating.

**Besecker-Rock:** Patti Jo, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Rock, Chambersburg, Pa., and Kirk Eugene, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ronnie Besecker, Waynesboro, Pa., March 5, in the Five Forks Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John Ritchey and Rev. W. Rupert Turman officiating.

**Frias-Hess:** Roxanne, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hess, Palm Harbor, Fl., and Javier, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzo Frias, Nuevo Laredo, Jan. 22, in the First Church of the Nazarene, McAllen, Tx.

**Higginbotham-Troup:** Angie, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Troup, Milford, In., and Harold, son of Mrs. Audrey Higginbotham, Nappanee, In., Jan. 22, in the Milford Apostolic Christian Church with Rev. Jesse Beer officiating.

**Knepper-Myers:** Cora E. Myers, Marion, Pa., and John Knepper, Harrisburg, Pa., Feb. 19, in the Montgomery Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Lorne Lichty officiating.

**Kolling-Dahlstrom:** Laureen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Don Dahlstrom, and Scott, son of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Kolling, both Abilene, Ks., March 5, in the Grace United Church of Christ with Rev. Norman Manz officiating.

**Matheney-Fults:** Sandra Jo, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Fults, and Charles Owen Matheney Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Pearsall, both McMinnville, Tn., Feb. 18, in the Rolling Acres Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Elam Dohner officiating.

**Mayes-Powell:** Deborah, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Powell, and Edward Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Mayes, Feb. 13, in the United Methodist Church, Harrisburg, Pa., with Dr. Russell Hart and Rev. Eugene Heidler officiating.

**Rogers-Friese:** Tresh, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Glen Friese, and Mike Rogers, son of Mary Corwell, both of Chambersburg, Pa., Feb. 21, in the Montgomery Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Lorne Lichty officiating.

**Rosenberry-Boxler:** Donna, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Boxler, Fayetteville, Pa., and Brian, son of Mr. and Mrs. Elbert Rosenberry, Six Mile Run, Pa., Feb. 26, in the New Guilford Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Terry Hoke officiating.

## Obituaries

**Bledsoe:** Mrs. Ruth Bledsoe, born Oct. 25, 1937, died Feb. 28, 1983 in the Asbury Hospital, Salina, Ks. On Nov. 27, 1955 she was married to Marius Bledsoe who survives. Also surviving are a son, Kelly; four daughters: Wava Marston, Marla Sticky, Marilyn Marston and Phyllis Henry; and three grandchildren. Rev. Kevin Ryan and Rev. David Wine conducted the funeral service in the Zion Brethren in Christ Church.

**Broughton:** Mrs. Violet Broughton, Wellandport, Ont., born Sept. 8, 1903, died March 7, 1983. She was married to Alvin Broughton who preceded her in death. She is survived by four sons: Ross, Harley, Glen and Lewis; a daughter, Alice

Collard; 32 grandchildren; and 21 great-grandchildren. She was a member of the Wainfleet Brethren in Christ Church. Rev. Lloyd Moore conducted the funeral service. Interment was in the Maple Lawn Cemetery.

**Brubaker:** Ella O. Brubaker, born Nov. 26, 1893, died March 11, 1983 in the Messiah Village, Mechanicsburg, Pa. She is survived by three brothers: Ezra O., Menno O., and Samuel O. She was a member of the Messiah Village Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral service was conducted by Rev. LeRoy Walters and Rev. Chester Wingert. A service was also held in the Elizabethtown Brethren in Christ Church. Interment was in the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery.

**Budousky:** Irma I. Budousky, born Aug. 25, 1906, died Feb. 27, 1983. Rev. Earl Lehman conducted the funeral service. Interment was in the IOOF Cemetery, Broad Top, Pa.

**Cassel:** Ida W. Cassel, died Jan. 28, 1983, at the age of 77. She is survived by a brother, Percy. Three brothers and four sisters preceded her in death. She was a member of the Rosebank Brethren in Christ Church, Ontario, where the funeral service was conducted by Rev. John Zuck.

**Dodson:** Mrs. Ada S. Dodson, Hopewell, Pa., born Aug. 30, 1896, died Feb. 23, 1983. She is survived by a daughter, Lorraine; a son, Donald; and eight grandchildren. The funeral service was conducted in the Shermans Valley Brethren in Christ Church by Rev. Earl Lehman and Rev. Sarah C. Clayton. Interment was in the Shermans Valley Cemetery.

**Dupes:** Walter K. (Bud) Dupes, born July 31, 1901, died Feb. 8, 1983. He was married to Mary Enterline who preceded him in death. He later married Martha Seltzer who survives. He was a member of the Messiah Village Brethren in Christ Church. Rev. LeRoy Walters, Bishop Brinser Heistand, Rev. Harold Brandt and Rev. Michael Rockafellow conducted the funeral service in the United Zion Church, Elizabethtown. A memorial service was held in the Messiah Village Chapel. Interment was in the Mount Tunnel Cemetery.

**Ford:** Lamberth E. Ford, Wells Tannery, Pa., born Sept. 26, 1891, died Dec. 19, 1982 in the Bedford Co. Memorial Hospital, Pa. He was preceded in death by his wife. Three daughters and two sons survive. Rev. Earl J. Lehman conducted the funeral service. Interment was in the Presbyterian Cemetery, Wells Tannery, Pa.

**Ford:** Mayme Ford, born July 18, 1889, died Dec. 3, 1982. Rev. Earl J. Lehman conducted the funeral service. Interment was in the Reformed Cemetery, Yellow Creek, Pa.

**Heisey:** Mrs. Katie M. Heisey, born May 2, 1893, died February 20, 1983. She was the daughter of Rev. Abram Z. and Elizabeth Musser Hess and was married to Paul W. Heisey, who died in 1925. As she reared her family of three small children, she was an active member of the Cross Roads congregation, teaching an adult women's Sunday school class. In 1950 she married Rev. Stephen W. Heisey (the brother of her first husband) and for 23 years shared in his ministry as a member of the Colyer congregation. Since 1974 Katie was a resident of Messiah Village. She is survived by four brothers and sisters: Anna Zercher and Mary Climenhaga, Messiah Village; Henry, Woodbury, PA; Ben, Lebanon, OH; three children: Mary, Sikalongo Mission, Zambia; Ethel Bundy, Navajo Mission, NM; Wilmer, Mount Joy, PA; three step-children: Ruth Fohringer and Aaron Heisey, Centre Hall, PA; Beau-

lah, Grantham, PA; 15 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren. Her brother, Abram M. and sister, Barbara Brubaker, preceded her in death. Pastor LeRoy Walters, and Rev. George Kibler conducted memorial services at Messiah Village. Pastor Dale H. Engle and Bishop Henry A. Ginder conducted the funeral service at Cross Roads church. Interment was in Mount Pleasant cemetery.

**Keefer:** Mrs. Anna M. Sollenberger Keefer, Chambersburg, Pa., born Dec. 19, 1903, died Feb. 20, 1983. She was married to Benjamin M. Keefer who preceded her in death in 1978. She is survived by a daughter, Julia Musser; two sons: Garnet and Fred; six grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren. She was a member of the Air Hill Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral service was conducted by Rev. Ralph Palmer, Rev. man. Interment was in the Air Hill Cemetery.

**Lauver:** Mrs. Ruth C. Lauver, Mifflintown, Pa., born Oct. 20, 1896, died Feb. 22, 1983. She was the daughter of Rufus and Leora Kanode. She was married to Harvey S. Lauver who preceded her in death in 1973. She is survived by four daughters: Lois Myers, Dorcas Brandt, Esther Davis, and Alma Shelly; six sons: Clair, Laban, George, Ray, Boyd and Rufus; 33 grandchildren; and 18 great-grandchildren. Three sons preceded her in death. She was a member of the Cedar Grove Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral service was conducted by Rev. Eugene Heidler and Rev. Kenneth Hepner. Interment was in the Cedar Grove Cemetery.

**Lichty:** Mrs. Alice I. Lichty, Messiah Village, Mechanicsburg, Pa., died Feb. 13, 1983 at the age of 71. She was preceded in death by her husband, John Lichty. She is survived by two brothers and four sisters. Rev. Ernest U. Dohner conducted the funeral service. Interment was in the Church of God Cemetery, Carlisle, Pa.

**Musser:** Mrs. Mary E. Singer Musser, Shipensburg, Pa., born Feb. 8, 1897, died March 13, 1983. She was married to Ira C. Musser who preceded her in death on Sept. 16, 1976. She is survived by two daughters: Anna Stayman, and Pauline Wenger; three sons: Alvin J., Martin L., and J. Melvin; two half sisters; three half brothers; 10 grandchildren; five step-grandchildren; a foster grandson; 31 great-grandchildren; eight step-grandchildren; and two foster great-grandchildren. She was a member of the Air Hill Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral service was conducted by Rev. Ralph Palmer, Rev. Roger Witter, and Rev. Wilbur Benner. Interment was in the Air Hill Cemetery.

**Shafer:** Raymond N. Shafer, Gettysburg, Pa., born Aug. 9, 1914 in Leitersburg, Md., died March 14, 1983. He was the son of Samuel J. and Emma J. Shultz Shafer. In August 1935, he was married to Hannah O. Paxton who survives. In addition he is survived by five children: Rev. R. Donald, Thelma Flewelling, Samuel J., Doris Deitzel and Nancy Arbaugh; 11 grandchildren; two brothers; and three sisters. He was a member of the Fairview Avenue Brethren in Christ Church where he had served as deacon. Rev. Lynn Thrush conducted the funeral service in the Fairview Avenue Church. Interment was in Green Hill Cemetery.

**Snively:** Robert L. Snively, Waynesboro, Pa., born Feb. 8, 1924, died Feb. 22, 1983 in the Guilford Convalesarium, Fayetteville, Pa. He is survived by his wife, Geraldine; two sons; six daughters; and 11 grandchildren. The funeral service was



conducted by Rev. Lorne Lichty. Interment was in the Green Hill Cemetery.

**Sollenberger:** Mrs. Hannah K. Sollenberger, Mercersburg, Pa., born Sept. 9, 1899, died Feb. 26, 1983 in the Messiah Village, Mechanicsburg. She was the daughter of Jacob W. and Anna Kahlbaugh Meyer. Her husband, Levi G. Sollenberger, preceded her in death. She is survived by a step-daughter, Esther Hayes. She was a member of the New Guilford Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral service was conducted by Rev. Maurice Bender and Rev. LeRoy Walters. Interment was in the New Guilford Cemetery.

**Stoner:** Joseph A. Stoner, East Berlin, Pa., born Oct. 31, 1907, died March 7, 1983 in the Brethren Home, New Oxford, Pa. He was married to Grace E. Kreider Stoner who survives. Also surviving are a daughter, Mary Ann Engle; eight sons: Ronald, Samuel, John, Robert, Jesse, Marlin, Benjamin, and Gerald; a brother; four sisters; 21 grandchildren; and a great-grandchild. He was a member of both the Grantham and Morning Hour congregations, having served as deacon in both churches. The memorial service was conducted in the Morning Hour Chapel by Rev. Herbert J. Hoover; his daughter-in-law, Rev. Nobuko Miyaki-Stoner; and son, Rev. John Stoner. Interment was in the Grantham Cemetery.

**Traver:** Mrs. Evelyn Traver, Wainfleet, Ont., born Feb. 1, 1915, died Feb. 18, 1983. She is survived by her husband, Jacob; three daughters: Edith Moore, Viola Williams, and Irene Sider; ten grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; two sisters; and three brothers. She was preceded in death by her first husband, Clarence Bossert; two daughters: Kathryn Bossert and Marie Traver; and a brother. She was a member of the Wainfleet Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral service was conducted by Rev. W. Edward Rickman and Rev. Frank Kipe. Interment was in the Zion Cemetery.

**Wengert:** Norman S. Wengert, Messiah Village, Mechanicsburg, Pa., died March 1, 1983 at the age of 82. He was married to Florence Ida Hock Wengert who preceded him in death in 1962. He is survived by two sons: Samuel H. and Roy A.; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and a sister. Two daughters and a sister preceded him in death. He was a member of the Mowersville Brethren in Christ Church. Rev. Charles L. Lehman and Rev. Barton Starr conducted the funeral service in the Air Hill Brethren in Christ Church. Interment was in the Air Hill Cemetery.

**Winger:** Clarence H. Winger, born in 1900 in Ontario, died Jan. 20, 1983. He was married to Rhoda A. Noake who survives. He was preceded in death by a sister, Verna Sider; three brothers: Paul, Walter and Marshal; and a number of nieces and nephews. Rev. E. Friesen, Rev. James Sider and Rev. G. McMillian conducted the funeral service. Interment was in the Rosebank Brethren in Christ Cemetery, Ont.

**Wingert:** Solomon B. Wingert, born Oct. 7, 1901, died Nov. 21, 1982. He was the son of George B. and Minnie Brechbill Wingert. He is survived by his wife, Frances W. Wingert; three children: John, Abigail Oldham; and Minnie Wright; eight grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Two sons preceded him in death. He was a member of the New Guilford Brethren in Christ Church. Rev. Maurice Bender conducted the funeral service. Interment was in the New Guilford Cemetery.

# Messiah College News

## Brethren in Christ sports tourney

Messiah College again hosted the annual denominational sports tournament in March, with the following winners:

**Bowling:** Clarence Center (first), Carlisle (second).

**Table Tennis:** Mechanicsburg (first), Manor, (second).

**Women's Volleyball—A-League:** Manheim (first), Manor, (second). **B-League:** Clarence Center (first), Antrim, (second).

**Men's Basketball—A-League:** Mechanicsburg (first), Manor (second). **B-League:** Manor (first), Cedar Grove (second). **C-League:** Antrim (first), Manor (second).

Dean Lehman, of the Mechanicsburg congregation, was the tournament director. He was assisted by Fred Barr and Dewey Hartsock of the Grantham congregation. Dean reports that the 37 congregations competing in the tournament are very thankful that Messiah College sponsors the event each spring.

## Commencement speaker

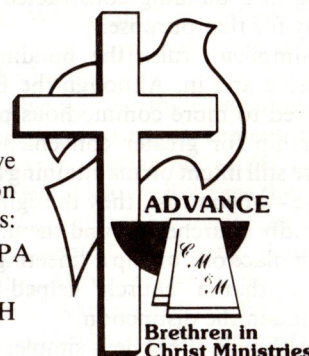
The speaker for Messiah's 73rd annual Commencement is Dr. Peter J. Liacouras, president of Temple University. As many readers know, Messiah's Philadelphia Campus operates in cooperation with Temple University.

## stewardship

### Regional Conferences Stewardship Promotion

We are pleased to announce the following have consented to serve as Stewardship Promotion Chairs in the United States regional conferences:

Allegheny—Dr. Owen H. Alderfer, Grantham, PA  
Atlantic—Marlin H. Thomas, Conestoga, PA  
Central—Rev. Edgar Wright, West Milton, OH  
Midwest—Dr. Ira Eyster, Norman, OK  
Pacific—Dr. Arthur M. Climenhaga, Upland, CA



Please give your cooperation and encouragement to these who will serve us this year. In the near future, the Canadian chair will also be announced.

### Capital Campaign Activity

The Commission on Stewardship and Finance has assisted the following in recent months to raise money for capital projects:

1. The Carlisle, Pa., congregation has committed \$436,842 to provide more facilities for worship, fellowship and Christian education. This has been the largest campaign ever for a local Brethren in Christ Church.
2. Kenbrook Bible Camp, Atlantic Conference, has received commitments of over \$228,000 toward a debt retirement campaign of \$200,000. The Board of Directors and staff committed more than one-fourth of the goal.
3. The Canadian Conference is preparing for a \$40,000 Mission Board campaign to provide capital for Venezuela and Canadian church planting.
4. In a first time effort to an interdenominational constituency in Saskatchewan, the Timber Bay Children's Home has received commitments totaling \$30,000.

The commission makes available its personnel to conference ministries and churches to assist them in special projects. A modest fee is charged for these special services.



## Ringgold Meeting House

# Reminder of Things Past and Present

by E. Morris Sider



Here and there in the Brethren in Christ Church survive reminders of our more distant past, guideposts on the road we have traveled together. Few are more pleasing and instructive than the meeting house in Ringgold, near Hagerstown, Maryland.

Constructed in 1871, the building was one of the first meeting houses in the denomination. It thus marks the transition of the congregation's worshipping in the homes of members to worshipping in a building constructed specifically for that purpose.

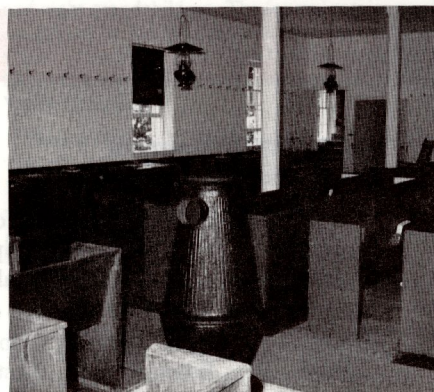
Simplicity rules the building, both outside and in. Although the Brethren moved to more commodious places of worship for greater convenience, they were still intent on maintaining a simple style—in contrast, they thought, to the worldly churches around them. Calling their place of worship a “meeting house” rather than a “church” helped them to maintain the distinction.

Although the style is simple, it is aesthetically pleasing. The brick exterior with inset doors and frames, shuttered windows, and lightly decorative cornice, suggests that the farming brethren who constructed it over 100 years ago had a fine sense of form and beauty. The same aesthetic quality is maintained in the interior with its plain, white plastered ceiling and walls touched only by a few doors, pegs for hats and coats, and the multi-panel inset windows.

The absence of a pulpit or a raised platform is striking, and purposeful. In their stead, at the center of the long wall opposite the entrances, stands a simple long table, unelevated. Behind the table sat the ministers (several in those days). The one who spoke used the table for the pulpit. In this fashion, the leaders

remained on the same level, literally an symbolically, with the laity. In front of the table is a long bench; on it, facing the audience, sat the deacons, one or two of whom assented to and commented on the sermon.

To the ministers' left, another table stands. Behind this one the wives of the ministers, in the same order as their husbands to their right.



In front and to the sides are the plain pews for the congregation. Thus the audience in a literal way virtually surrounded the Word and the ministers. The arrangement was familiar to the audience: when they had earlier worshipped in their houses, they had there also surrounded the Word, since the sermon was preached from the large doorway between two rooms, in one of which sat the women and girls, and in the other the men and the boys.

On the floors above and below the main meeting room were accommodations for the love feast, usually held twice a year—in the spring and the fall. At love feast time the church family became an extended one, with members from other congregations joining the local brothers and sisters in testimony meeting, doctrinal exposition, feet washing and communion, and (not least) in eating. In the basement a table is set for a love feast meal. Nearby is a brick stove on which the meal was prepared. This

fellowship meal had its own significance: what could be more fitting on such occasions than to eat together, since the church family was the spiritual counterpart of the smaller one that shared meals together each day in the home?

Love feasts were not hurried affairs; they lasted for at least two days, in some places more. Travel by horse and buggy meant that those who came from a distance required sleeping accommodations. Some spent the nights in the home of the local members; others slept above the main room in the meeting house. Still to be seen in this room are some beds with their rope bottoms, as well as the partition that divided the sexes.

The Ringgold congregation no longer exists. The building, however, has been restored to its original condition. Each year the Ringgold Restoration Committee sponsors a hymn sing on the church grounds, this year on Sunday, July 31 at 6 p.m. The Brethren in Christ Historical Society will conduct a worship service patterned after earlier ones on June 5 at 3 p.m. The “old time” preacher for this service is Henry Ginder. Both events are open to the public.

Beyond these occasions, the building is available for use by any group or congregation wishing to explore its Brethren in Christ roots. Sunday school classes, youth groups, membership classes, and others may wish to consider having an activity in the meeting house, such as conducting an early form of worship service or a love feast, or a discussion on their Brethren in Christ heritage. The Brethren in Christ Historical Society will be pleased to help plan and direct such activities. The Society's president, Owen Alderfer, may be contacted by writing to Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027.

In such ways, the Ringgold Meeting House can serve as a gentle reminder of biblical concepts and practices that still have meaning for us today. ■

*E. Morris Sider, a member of the Messiah College faculty, is the denomination's archivist and edits the historical society's journal, Brethren in Christ History and Life.*



## Odd inconsistencies?

It would be inappropriate within any Christian perspective to seem to favor nuclear war even a little bit. In light of its immense potential for destruction, common sense would reject it without recourse to Christian principle. But after the response in March *Visitor* aroused by the six-page section on "peace making in the nuclear age" (January issue), there needs to be something added to the picture.

I suspect a basic difficulty resides in the fact that our zealous dedication to the Christian faith is prone at times to display an intellectual haughtiness unbecoming to that faith. Our most commendable zeal for the principles of our faith sets us up for a certain arrogance about material understandings. In no age has human understanding been equal to the reality of the situation. While our greatest asset is our spiritual life and Christian quality, we still live in a finite world. What we lack in temporal knowledge needs to be made up in humility, a Christian grace that is both valid and efficacious in the nuclear age.

May I suggest a few things that need to be covered so that our peace testimony might be more effective? Some may not seem important, but it may help to be reminded. Why in Christian perspective did we need a civilization-destroying bomb to raise us to a real crescendo of opposition to war? Conventional weapons kill people just as dead as do atomic bombs. Could it be due somewhat to the realization that nuclear weapons leave us ourselves more vulnerable? Are we as *self-denyingly* dedicated to a virtuous cause as we'd like to think? Christians were not first nor are they alone in their opposition to atomic bombs. It is always easy to support popular causes. In World War II the best we could do was object to our own involvement. The atomic bomb made that posture obsolete.

Then, too, it is most difficult to keep our anti-nuclear expression unentangled from political posture. When the big religious issue becomes identical with the big political issue, the bases of our attitudes automatically get confused. We believe in separation of church and state when the state interferes with the

church, but not so much when the church wants to interfere with the state. The validity of our Christianity as a faith all too often is seen as a license for having our way about all temporal matters too.

Again, despite the awfulness of atomic war, there doesn't seem to be sufficient scriptural basis for the disrespect we sometimes heap on political leaders who happen to go against our thinking. If the Apostle Paul could be moved to say "the powers that be are ordained of God" while under the authority of the Caesars, certainly there is little excuse for some of our expressed attitude toward our own country and its leaders. Fortunately the *Visitor* does not print as much of this kind of thing as some "Christian" periodicals do.

There is enough recorded history available of a sort to give us pause in the degree of our indifference concerning the intentions of the other participant in the "arms race," even while we vigorously condemn our own government officials for expressing just such a concern. Our faith in Jesus certainly should include a healthy abhorrence of *any* war, but it should not take the form of stupidity even as to temporal matters. The Jesus that preached and lived peace and social justice also would approve of the good of the life that is available in our country.

There is an odd inconsistency appear-

ing between what might be called the almost frantic opposition to nuclear war and the fundamental elements of the Christian faith. It seems we now believe in a God that would just let his world be blown up and us with it. Certainly the fundamental eschatology of our faith should not let us get caught up in such a frenzied apprehension.

To whom are we addressing our nuclear objections and for what reasons? The men in Washington do not read our *Visitor*. It is we Brethren in Christ and some others of similar Christian sentiments that do read it. Our new-found awareness of the social implications of our faith and our perception of the great dangers attendant to international relations in a nuclear age call for something long overdue in our church: a fresh systematizing of our fundamental theology. We should be together in our pursuit of the truth, not apart in our belief of what it is.

The subject is worthy of a summary statement expressing agreement with those who see nuclear war as the worst imaginable holocaust. But I see those of the Christian faith as having the greatest positive potential for facing such an eventuality. However, we are in need of an incisive awareness of our finite limitations and with it a better understanding of our faith.

Millard Herr  
Upland, CA

## SCRIPTURES to live by '83

Sunday, May 8 • Psalms 57-59  
Monday, May 9 • Proverbs 13-15  
Tuesday, May 10 • Proverbs 16-18  
Wednesday, May 11 • Proverbs 19-21  
Thursday, May 12 • Proverbs 22-24  
Friday, May 13 • Proverbs 25-27  
Saturday, May 14 • Proverbs 28-31  
Sunday, May 15 • Psalms 60-62  
Monday, May 16 • S. of Solomon 1-4  
Tuesday, May 17 • S. of Solomon 5-8  
Wednesday, May 18 • 1 Kings 5-7

Thursday, May 19 • 1 Kings 8-11  
Friday, May 20 • Ecclesiastes 1-4  
Saturday, May 21 • Ecclesiastes 5-8  
Sunday, May 22 • Psalms 63-65  
Monday, May 23 • Ecclesiastes 9-12  
Tuesday, May 24 • 1 Kings 12-14  
Wednesday, May 25 • 1 Kings 15-17  
Thursday, May 26 • 1 Kings 18-20  
Friday, May 27 • 1 Ki. 21, 22; 2 Ki. 1  
Saturday, May 28 • 2 Kings 2-4  
Sunday, May 29 • Psalms 66-68  
Monday, May 30 • 2 Kings 5-7  
Tuesday, May 31 • 2 Kings 8-10

Wednesday, June 1 • 2 Kings 11:  
1-14:25  
Thursday, June 2 • Jonah  
Friday, June 3 • 2 Ki. 14:26-29,  
Amos 1-3  
Saturday, June 4 • Amos 4-6

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# readers respond

## Front line ministry

Your editorial of February 1983 struck a chord in my heart. I like the point you made that we are all "part of the body." This has been brought into focus to us since our daughter and son-in-law are in Japan in a missionary role. So many people have come to us and commended us for having children "on the front line." We are very happy for their obedience to the Lord and for their service there. But we also are happy for our two other daughters and their husbands who are all active in the work of the Lord in two different congregations here in the U.S. To us, they are equally "on the front line."

Lela Hostetler  
Grantham, PA

## Plurality of leaders

I found both David Hall's article on ordination and John A Byers' article on

elders (Feb. 1983) quite thought provoking. I quite agree with much of Byers' concluding two paragraphs. However, though I agree that the principles we practice are of primary importance, the terms we use are also of influence, though it be subconscious. Paul's practice of referring to people in terms of their function (prophet, teacher, preacher) has much merit. We need to be careful not to overuse ambiguous titles (elder, bishop) that I fear for many today no longer clearly identify a function, but carry an aura of importance that, in my opinion, is unfounded. This is not only detrimental to the body as a whole, but also, more specifically, to those given the opportunity to serve under these titles.

I sincerely hope that the Brethren in Christ church, particularly on the congregational level, will be challenged by the idea that "leadership is done in the plural." Today in many situations the

position of "pastor" has taken on the qualifications outlined in the cartoon accompanying Hall's article. Perhaps we need to review the use of the word "pastor," feeling free to apply it to others besides the preacher or church administrator. This can only relieve a burden placed on some and bring fulfillment to others.

The practice of ordination, the laying on of hands, in recognition of specific gifts is very important. However, it may subtly destroy the equality of the members of the body. The more widespread use of ordination (not only for ministers, bishops, missionaries) for identifying and encouraging the exercising of gifts could be helpful. There is evidence of such efforts within the church. May we continue to grow in this area so that our witness may be strengthened.

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# Onesimus

*Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you . . . will tell you everything that is happening here.*

*Colossians 4:9*

Dear Paul:

Although there has been no mail from Rome since I last wrote, I've decided to write again. I don't want you to imagine that I'm only observing how the powerful act. I've also been observing myself and the many others like me. Perhaps I can stimulate you there in prison with a few more questions that are important to me now.

I'm far enough along in my faith to know that its not "faith in Paul" that saves. But there is a tendency to pay extra attention to what the leaders are saying here. After doing that, I'm often less than satisfied. Let me identify one of the big questions around here just now: "What should be our attitude toward governments?" There seems to be a lot of division within the churches in this country on that issue. There is so much freedom here that big-name Christians talk about political questions on radio and television. To follow any one of them on this issue would almost surely lead me off course.

Some people, as you might expect, refer to your advice to the Christians in Rome. Frankly, I hear some people quoting you out of context. Others comment on how the disciples acted before the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem. I've also been thinking a lot about all that I can learn from the stories of Jesus during three years of public ministry in Palestine.

The deeper I get into this question of the Christian's attitude toward governments, the more aware I am of striking similarities between "leader-follower" dynamics both in the church and in nations. What is a little person like me to do—choose a spokesman, and hope I'm following a leader with the "right" bias?

Is it too presumptuous to draw on a truth I heard you sharing with Timothy? You said that he should do his best to "present himself to God" as a workman who correctly handles the word of truth. Was that truth only for Timothy because he is becoming a leader, or was it for me too?

Increasingly, I'm finding that to keep my balance is to listen to each speaker with open mind, but, as they say here, "with a grain of salt". I like to ponder what I heard you and John and Peter say about it. But even more helpful is to study deeply into what Jesus did and taught. I'm finding increased calm and assurance in this practice, so that I just pray about the remaining doubts. An exciting thing is happening—as I become more skilled at "proving all things" this way, the Spirit is helping me to pick up gems of truth, even from people who are not on my list of favorites.

So, my question this time is: Are you offended if I apply your advice to Timothy about careful study to my own situation? And, can you rejoice with me that Christian leaders here are, more and more, only instruments through whom God speaks? I'm finding growing security in the faithfulness of the Spirit to me personally. Write again if you can.

—Onesimus



## Reflections on Bible study

*NEWS ITEM: Implementing a joint resolution of Congress signed into law last October, President Reagan on February 3 officially proclaimed 1983 to be the Year of the Bible.*

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Judging from a Gallop poll released at Easter, the Bible may be found in the homes of many Americans, but it hasn't been "hidden away in their hearts." Of the 1,500 persons surveyed, only 42 percent associated Christ with the Sermon on the Mount, and only 46 percent were able to name the four gospels which recount his life. This despite the fact that 87 percent of those polled indicated that Christ had in some way "influenced" their life, with 81 percent considering themselves Christian. "Knowledge of biblical facts is poor, even among religiously involved persons and the college-educated," concluded the Gallop study.

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"I used to think that the Psalms were little readings the pastor used to fill in the 'empty spaces' during Sunday morning worship. But in this class I've discovered that the Psalms are really alive—they are God's Word for me—and I've learned how to find out for myself what they mean. Thanks for the class."

Those encouraging words came at the end of a course I taught as a part-time instructor at Messiah College in the early '70s. Using the inductive approach to Bible study, and doing a large amount of work on an independent study basis, the class had worked through selections from Job, Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

About half of the class were religion majors. Of the other majors, a large number were relatively new believers. It was exciting and personally rewarding to watch these new Christians learn how to study the Bible for themselves. Over the course of several months, their papers reflected a growing ability to understand and appreciate some of the deeper meanings found in the Scripture passages.

And the religion majors? For some reason, all I recall is several of them complaining that I was asking them to do too much Bible study. (I still haven't figured that one out!)

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How do you read the Bible? John R. Martin, in "Keys to Successful Bible Study," suggests there are three common approaches. The first is casual reading, which he likens to a leisurely Sunday drive through the country, not going anywhere in particular, nor looking for anything special. (I suppose even this type of reading is better than no Bible reading at all—assuming that the repeated exposure to Scripture may help to subconsciously shape our minds.)

Far better is the reflective approach, which he says resembles taking a drive with the intent of seeing some new and interesting sight. "To read reflectively is to read with your mind alert and your eyes open to some new discovery. It is to approach the Bible with a hunger to be fed and an anticipation of finding some fresh truth" (p. 70).

The third approach he calls research reading—reading the Bible while looking for a specific teaching or concept, and recording our findings. Using his analogy of the Sunday drive, it is like a person building a new home, driving around to check on current color schemes for bricks, shingles and paint. "Research reading does require time, thought, and diligence. But this is precisely why it has significant rewards. I recommend it to you" (p. 75).

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And I recommend you buy a copy of "Keys to Successful Bible Study" if you are at all interested in experiencing the joy of discovering biblical truths for yourself. John Martin, a member of the faculty of Eastern Mennonite Seminary, has written a clear, easily-understood guide to personal study of the Bible.

In the first third of his book, Martin notes the benefits of studying the Bible, outlines some of the hindrances to effective study, and provides basic clues to understanding the Bible's message. In part two, he explains and illustrates various methods of study as well as giving tips on memorization. The third section provides additional resources for study, including capsule summaries of each book in the Bible.

Published by Herald Press and available from Christian Light Bookstores (\$5.95 U.S.), this paperback guide would also make an excellent gift for a teenager or adult, as well as for your own use. But it, like the Bible itself, has little value if kept on the shelf, unused.

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Even before 1983 had been announced as the Year of the Bible, we had decided to incorporate a chart of daily Bible readings in the new, monthly *Visitor*. By following "Scriptures to Live By," prepared by the National Association of Evangelicals, you can read through the entire Bible in the course of one year.

Perhaps you didn't get started on this venture in January, but now wish you had. Take courage. John Martin notes that the average reader can read through both the Old and New Testaments in about 60 hours. (And if you wish to receive the reading outlines published in previous *Visitors*, simply send us a stamped, self-addressed envelope—we'll mail them to you free.)

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Of course, the objective is not simply that of reading the Bible through in a year. Our purpose ought to be that of immersing ourselves in Scripture, so that the Holy Spirit can teach us about God, conforming us to God's image and nature. As the Psalmist wrote,

*You are my portion, O Lord;*

*I have promised to obey your words.*

*I have sought your face with all my heart;*

*be gracious to me according to your promise.*

*I have considered my ways*

*and have turned my steps to your statutes.*

*Psalm 119:57-59*

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*editorial*



May 22—Pentecost Sunday

# The Royal Law

by William L. Poteet

Elmer Schmelzenbach tells the story of a Swazi widow whose only son was falsely accused of murder. Convinced of his innocence and overwhelmed by the prospect of his imprisonment, trial and possible sentence of death by hanging, the young man's mother sought out every means to save her son. Her appeals to all sources were rebuffed until she recalled a royal law which decreed that any citizen of Swaziland was entitled to an audience with the king to plead his cause and find redress for his grievances.

After walking eighty miles to the capital and fasting for ten days as she waited, she was finally granted an audience with King Sobuza II who heard her case. He not only set her son free, but sent him home in the royal limousine in which no one but the king himself ever rode, and sent along a herd of cattle as a royal gift as well! All this because a mother believed in her son, trusted her king and obeyed a royal law.

In the earliest letter written to the New Testament church, the Apostle James reminds us of another royal law: "If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing right" (Jas. 2:8).

Why does he call it the "royal law"? William Barclay suggests several meanings for the phrase. "It is the law which is of supreme excellence . . . the king of all laws, that is, it is the law in light of which all others must be judged and applied." The Apostle Paul says of it in Galatians 5:14, "The entire law is summed up in a single command." It has royal rank over the other commandments.

It is, Barclay continues, "the law which is given by the King of kings, that which is uniquely the law of the king." When asked, "What is the greatest commandment of all?", Jesus responded with the *shema*, the great summary statement of the Jewish faith. "Hear, O

Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deu. 6:4, 5). Jesus made one amendment to it, adding the phrase "with all your mind," for he realized that being part of God's family and obeying him involves our intelligent decision, our willful choice to serve God and make him Lord of all.

But equally important in the mind of the Lord Jesus was this commandment James calls the royal law. Having given a typically rabbinic reply, Jesus went on, expanding his answer to remind his listeners that love for God cannot be divorced from love for one's fellowman. To the familiar words from Deuteronomy, he added a quotation from Leviticus 19:18. This verse, in its original setting in the Holiness Code, seems to refer exclusively to the fellow-Israelite. However, a bit farther in the same chapter (v. 34), "the law of the stranger" extends the command to include the non-Israelite neighbor as well. Jesus beautifully illustrated this law, and added further dimension and depth to it, when he chose a member of the hated and despised Samaritans to determine the scope and meaning of the word "neighbor." By binding love for God to love for neighbor, Jesus elevated this command to the highest level of importance.

The royal law, Barclay further suggests, is "the law that makes kings and is fit for kings. To keep that greatest law is to become king of oneself and a king among men. It is a law fit for those who are royal and is able to make men royal."

In his classic short story, "The Man Who Would Be King," Rudyard Kipling tells of Peachey Carnehan and Daniel Dravot, two English ne'er-do-wells living by their wits in colonial India, who hit upon the scheme of becoming kings of the isolated, mountainous state of Kafiristan and thus be set for life. By trickery and force of arms, Peachey and

Dravot accomplished their dream and, crowned with turquoise-studded gold crowns, ruled a naive people who believed them to be gods.

But these loafers were impelled by a dream of kingship—not of constitutional limitations or social arrangements, but a "real" kingship of absolute power. Dravot, with a flaming red beard and a temper to match, saw himself not as a figurehead but as supreme sovereign of the land. He began to dream of turning over the kingdom to Queen Victoria, of taking his place among the Empire Builders. But his desire for a royal line, for someone to carry on the kingdom after his death, led to their downfall. Their subjects came to realize that they were not gods but mere men.

Paradoxically, the two loafers became most truly kings in the moment when their false kingship was taken from them. That is, when external kingship was lost, internal kingship was achieved. For Peachey and Dravot, as for all of us, true kingship is found to lie in the exercise of power over the self.

Royal implies sovereignty; it involves placing the crown where it rightly belongs. As hymnwriter George Matheson correctly put it:

*My will is not my own  
Till Thou has made it Thine;  
If it would reach a monarch's throne  
It must its crown resign;  
It only stands unbent  
Amid the clashing strife,  
When on Thy bosom it has leant,  
And found in Thee its life.*

Or in the words of Avis B. Christiansen:

*There's a royal route to heaven—  
'Tis the way the Saviour trod.  
'Tis the path of full surrender  
And the deep, sweet peace of God*

It is evident that the royal law is impossible of fulfillment short of the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit, for as in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus calls us to an absolute ethic, quite beyond the scope of even our highest and best human effort.

He who calls us to be born again also requires us to be holy. It is the only way to heaven; it is the only way to fulfill the royal law.

*A frequent contribution to the Visitor,  
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